Why a European Guide?
Transplant medicine and transplantation have progressed during the last decades in a way that nobody would have imagined before. The transplantation of organs offers major therapeutic benefits and improvements to quality of life and is, in many cases, the only life-saving treatment for end-stage organ failure. The most critical factor remains the supply of organs for transplantation, but only organs recovered following strict quality and safety standards are likely to function satisfactorily, and careful evaluation of donors is essential to minimise the risk of transmission of infections or malignancies. Furthermore, since human organs can currently only be derived from the body of a person, strong ethical principles need to be associated with their use.

The Council of Europe is the leading standard-setting institution in this field. It actively promotes the non-commercialisation of organ donation, the fight against organ trafficking and the development of ethical, quality and safety standards in the field of organ, tissue and cell transplantation, the fight against organ trafficking, and the development of ethical, quality and safety standards in the field of substances of human origin.

The European Committee on Organ Transplantation (CD-P-TO) is the Steering Committee in charge of transplantation activities for the European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines & HealthCare (EDQM, Council of Europe). One priority of its work programme is the elaboration of the Guide to the quality and safety of organs for transplantation. As a result of the work of many leading European experts in the field, this guide constitutes a common standard for all Council of Europe member states, based on the long-standing expertise and knowledge of the EDQM.

Who is the guide designed for?
This 5th Edition of the Guide to the quality and safety of organs for transplantation collates updated information to provide professionals identifying organ donors, transplant co-ordinators managing the donation process and transplant physicians responsible for organ allocation and utilisation with a useful overview of the most recent advancements in the field. This guide is intended to provide easy-to-use information and guidance to all professionals involved in donation and transplantation of organs so as to maximise their quality and to minimise risks and, thereby, improve the success rate of transplants.

What information does the guide contain?
The guide applies to the donation and transplantation of organs of human origin for therapeutic purposes. It covers important ethical principles that must always be respected in any donation and transplantation procedure, guidance on the assessment of donors to prevent the transmission of infectious, malignant or other diseases, recent views on donor management, as well as state-of-the-art information to ensure the quality and safety of organs during the multiple relevant procedures that take place from donation to transplantation.

The guide makes reference to EU mandatory requirements where appropriate and describes generally-accepted good practice.

NEW: information relating to quality and safety standards for tissues and cells for human application are now separately published in the Guide to the quality and safety of tissues and cells for human application. This new guide contains sound information and guidance for all professionals involved in donation, banking, transplantation and other clinical applications of these medical products of exceptional nature.

The EDQM also annually publishes the Newsletter Transplant, which gives international figures on organ donation and transplantation activity throughout Europe and beyond.

Finally, the Council of Europe Guide to the Preparation, Use and Quality Assurance of Blood Components provides principles and standards designed to ensure the safety, efficacy and quality of blood components.

Publication and purchase of the guide
The guide is available in book and online versions, in English. The online version is available to all who have purchased the book version. For more information, please visit the EDQM website www.edqm.eu or EDQM Store at www.edqm.eu/store.

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