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Establishing Guidelines for Organ Donation Systems

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Organ donation systems around the world operate differently and independently for many reasons: they are based on different legislative frameworks, different healthcare systems with varying financing approaches, and a variety of societal and religious backgrounds. Nonetheless, all national systems have a common need to rely on public altruism and trust, which must be built on a foundation of transparent public health education and policies.

Several international approaches have helped to establish the basis for organ and tissue donation, allocation, and transplantation: the World Health Organization endorsed Guiding Principles in 1991 and the Declaration of Istanbul, Barcelona Principles, and European Commission Guidelines in 2012. However, actual guidance on the practical implementation of Organ Donation Organizations has been missing.

To address this issue, Transplant Quebec and the Canadian Donation and Transplant Research Program invited 61 participants from 13 countries to produce

consensus recommendations aimed at assisting nations and geographical regions to either (i) establish their own system of organ donation and transplantation or (2) modify existing systems to improve organ donation and health care for all patients in need of a transplant.

The result of this consensus meeting is a series of 7 articles published together in this issue of *Transplantation Direct*, covering not only basic ethical principles and legal aspects but also addressing the issue of how research can be conducted to further improve organ donation. A total of 94 recommendations are supported by the current literature and presented with explanatory statements.

The result is a valuable global resource for advancing organ donation that will enhance the knowledge and skills of all who work in the field and ultimately optimize all donation opportunities.

The Editors of *Transplantation Direct* are pleased to publish the important work of the many dedicated people involved in this task.

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