



Voice/Voix

Organ and Tissue Donation in Canadian Undergraduate Medical Education

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Organ and tissue donation is responsible for saving thousands of lives every year worldwide. Unfortunately there is a discrepancy between the demand for organs and tissues and the availability of donors. Donation depends on the knowledge and attitudes of physicians and lack of adequate training has been cited as a major barrier to physician involvement in donation. Undergraduate medical education can be a powerful method to improve organ and tissue donation rates. The topic is also part of the Medical Council of Canada (MCC) objectives (Head Trauma / Brain Death / Transplant Donations). Nevertheless, a gap still exists in Canadian medical students' knowledge about donation. Our objective is to implement a novel course on organ and tissue donation into Canadian undergraduate medical curricula.

Our Introductory Course on Organ and Tissue Donation, produced and distributed by the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations-Québec (IFMSA-Quebec), is based on classroom lectures, small group and/or simulation-based learning session, and aims at raising knowledge of and support for donation among future physicians. Topics covered include; context of organ and tissue donation, organ and tissue donation procedures, identification of potential organ and tissue donors, referral to organ and tissue procurement centres, communication with families, and bioethical issues in organ and tissue donation. Physician-leaders in organ donation, such as Drs. Shemie, Marsolais, Langevin and D'Aragnon, have been involved in the development of this course. So far, it has received endorsement from the Quebec Medical Association, the Quebec Society of Intensivists, the Canadian Blood Services, Transplant Quebec, and Hema-Quebec, to name a few.

McGill have integrated a one hour course on donation into the curriculum's neurology portion while faculty at the University of Montreal have agreed to adapt its existing organ donation class. This initiative has brought together over fifty student leaders from 13 Canadian medical schools. A position statement on medical education in donation, produced through a joint effort by these student leaders, will be presented in April 2016 during the Canadian Federation of Medical Student general assembly. Moreover, the course material has been shared with several interested countries, and the initiative will be published in the August 2016 edition of Medical Student International.

All materials associated with this standardized curriculum are offered for free and modifications are permitted as long as adequate credits are given to the people and organizations behind its production (IFMSA-Quebec and Canadian Blood Services).

Quebec course: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B5aVfOIzJEpzWW9rNmdVMHhnMEU>

Ontario course: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B5aVfOIzJEpzSS03UHdTc2Ywb2s>