



ACADEMIC EXAMS
AT THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LISBON
INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED TRAINING

Masters:

Bioethics

Name of Student:

Marta Raquel Dias Barcelos

Subject of Thesis:

Integrity of the Person: Ethical Founding for the Donation of Organs and Tissue for Transplanting

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Very Good by Unanimity

Jury:

President: Professor Fernando Martins Vale (FMUL)

Orientator: Professor Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (UA)

Co-Orientator: Professor António Barbosa (FMUL)

Jury Members: Professor Fernando Cascais (FCSHUNL)

UA – University of the Azores

FCSH-UNL- Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of the New University of Lisbon



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ABSTRACT

The western anthropological and philosophical notion of 'person' emerges as a corporal and spiritual entity, which determines his singularity at the level of community. From this perspective, the notion of 'person' holds an important place in ethical considerations concerning the scientific applications of artificial manipulation of human life. More precisely, the notion of 'person' must contribute towards the ethical basis of transplant therapeutics.

The transplantation of human organs and tissues is one of the most notable advances in twentieth century medicine, and, as such, has had an unquestionable impact on health care practice. Transplants are now seen as the best treatment for chronic diseases that impair the function of some vital organs, improving the patient health and/or quality of life. The success of organs transplantation depends entirely upon the altruism of people giving their bodies for the well-being of others. Organ donation, performed during life or after death, raises not only technical, but also mainly ethical challenges.

This work focuses on the ethical considerations associated with human organs and tissue donation for transplantation and on the impact that a donation of an organ has on the notion of 'person'. At the same time that one recognizes the need to increase the number of organs for transplanting, there is also the need to preserve the donor's corporal integrity and his eminent dignity. Strategies to preserve the donor's corporal integrity and dignity must take into consideration the dialogue between the principle of autonomy, which is characterized by the singular entity, and the principle of solidarity, born out of one's relationship with those around you. These ethical principles, once engaged and fulfilled, are the bases of a voluntary and altruistic donation, and prevent the donor from becoming a mere instrument and being exploited as such.

Key-words: person; donation; autonomy; solidarity; transplantation.