

FROM THE PRESS

Tamil Nadu government to promote cadaver transplant programme

Three government orders passed by the Tamil Nadu government seek to strengthen the cadaver transplant programme in the state by setting up an online organ registry, evolving criteria for organ sharing among hospitals and providing for "Non Transplant Organ Retrieval Centres".

The government will create an advisory committee headed by the health secretary and four sub-committees, one each for liver, heart, kidneys and other organs. A convener for the cadaver transplant programme and a coordinator based at the government general hospital will also be appointed.

All hospitals approved for transplantation of human organs and willing to participate in this programme will upload details of their waiting list of organ recipients online. The online database will maintain priority lists for each hospital, all hospitals combined, and all private hospitals. If there is a patient who is a multi-organ recipient, then he or she will gain precedence over others. Any individual needing organ transplantation can register with one hospital under the cadaver transplant programme. Whenever a deceased donor becomes available, the hospital shall contact the transplant coordinator, who will make the allocations based on established criteria.

The Appropriate Authority, under the Transplantation of Human Organs Act, will register all hospitals that have a minimum of 25 beds along with an operation theatre and intensive care unit as "Non Transplant Organ Retrieval Centres". These hospitals are permitted to certify brain death as per the procedures already specified and, thereafter, remove organs, but not perform transplantation.

Ramya Kannan. Government moves to strengthen cadaver transplant programme *The Hindu*, September 7, 2008.

Doctors on loan

Many departments in government medical colleges in Maharashtra are short of the number of professors required by the standards of the Medical Council of India. But the government has found a way to handle this. Whenever an MCI team visits a college to inspect its infrastructure, the government sends over teachers from another of its colleges. When the team leaves, the professors rush back to their parent colleges. So, JJ's dean Dr BM Sabnis is at Dhule posing as a dean of that college since an MCI team is coming there for inspection. He is accompanied by at least five other doctors from JJ hospital, in ENT, orthopaedics, paediatrics and surgery. So are doctors from medical colleges in Nagpur and Aurangabad.

The scam of gaining recognition from the MCI by deceit and false representation is taking place with the full knowledge of the department of medical education. When the department's secretary was asked for his comment, he said, "Sometimes we don't have enough number of people when an MCI team comes for inspection. So, we have to shuffle the pack and send some doctors from one college to another." A senior doctor from the health department explained, "If we do not do this, many of our colleges will have to shut shop on account of paucity of faculty members. As a result, aspiring medical students from the state will have nowhere to go."

Dr Vasant Pawar, a member of the MCI, said, "We will order a probe and will take strict action against those who are found violating rules."

Santosh Andhale. Ghost doctors. *Mumbai Mirror*, August 7, 2008.

The latest in mind reading techniques

As the country debates the validity of narcoanalysis and brain mapping tests, forensic experts are touting a new technology, Brain Electrical Oscillation Signature (Beos), as more "effective and non-invasive" in criminal case probes.

"Beos can pinpoint actual persons present in the crime scene among many suspects, something that both narcoanalysis and brain mapping cannot," said Mukundan CR, consultant to the Directorate of Forensic Sciences. "Beos uses conventional, non-invasive and safe methods of recording electrophysiological activity and is better than the methods used now. Abroad, narcoanalysis has been banned in civil cases," added MS Rao, director of Directorate of Forensic Sciences, Delhi.

Mukundan said that both brain mapping and Beos record electrical activity from the the brain when the suspect is presented with auditory probes referring to the crime being probed. In Beos, even if the subject keeps mum, the probes will record the reaction of the brain. "There are two kinds of memories - conceptual and experiential. All suspects will have conceptual memory of any crime, meaning he will know that a murder has been committed. But experiential knowledge will only be with the suspect who was present when the crime happened or if he was part of it. In Beos, experiential memory is activated unlike brain mapping."

In 2008, session courts in Pune and Mumbai passed judgement and handed out life sentences for murder in cases based on the findings of Beos. These tests were conducted in the state forensic lab in Kalina, Mumbai.

Agencies. Better brain test on offer. *The Times of India*, July 14, 2008. Nitasha Natu. This brain test maps the truth. *The Times of India*, July 21, 2008.