

Editorial**CREATE AND DEVELOP A BODY DONATION PROGRAM IN THE 21ST CENTURY****Susana N. Biasutto**

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Most Body Donation Programs (PDC) were created and developed several decades ago, in the 20th century. The conditions and circumstances of its origin were completely different from those of today, although they were modified and adapted according to the times.

Cultural, technological and communications changes determine particular characteristics for the current era that significantly differentiate it from 30, 50 or 100 years ago. However, the difference does not entail greater ease or difficulty in itself.

In general, we do not know the situations that the PDC faced in the 20th century. Although its general characteristics are known, the experiences and challenges that its organizers faced are not published and were not transmitted to their successors.

Creating a PDC today can be approached in different ways:

- **Authorities' decisión (vertical):** When the university or government authority imposes it as a policy on the subject, it may work well or

not, depending on multiple social factors, its organization and the affinity that the population has with said authority and with the university. The authority must have a very firm executing group with high credibility. If its link with society is weak and/or the organization is not transparent, it can lead to failure.

- **Professors' initiative (horizontal):** If it is generated by the initiative of the university professors who will be in charge of executing the PDC, it may be more complex, but probably more effective. Professors will request institutional approval, for which it shall be necessary to find the means to inform, convince and achieve the corresponding approval; those are the same requirements necessary to be able to develop the PDC.

But the creation of a PDC does not guarantee its development, growth and effectiveness to achieve the expected objectives. The commitment of the executors is directly related to the results. It is likely that we will omit some considerations but we will state the aspects that we think are essential to move forward with a PDC:

- **Knowledge of the subject.** Body donation is a sensitive topic and this makes it complex. Not all societies have the same response and previous experiences in the world show very varied situations. The executors of the PDC should demonstrate solvency in their knowledge (not only of the PDC itself, but also of all the factors involved, of external experiences, of the general situation, including some sociological and psychological concepts).
- **Knowledges related to the potential donor population.** Prejudices and preconceptions usually emerge when formulating a PDC. It is very important not to be influenced by

statements or assumptions, but to try to manage scientifically valid data that exposes the population's thinking on the subject, trying to get as many variables as possible, in order to adequately evaluate the attitude of potential donors in relation to body donation. This information will allow us to know the weaknesses and strengths of the proposal, focus on improving the PDC image and information.

- **Serious, respectful and transparent organization.** The organization of a PDC cannot seek for immediacy. The results will take time. In populations where the issue is not known, more intense work will be required but positive results will certainly be obtained if the structuring of the program is simple but efficient, if donations are voluntary, if the bodies are respected and the altruism of the donors is recognized. If the actions and information are transparent, if the law and human rights are not transgressed.
- **Positive Attitude for hard work.** We have already mentioned repeatedly the need for the working group involved in a PDC to be willing to dedicate time and effort, which must be supported by a deep knowledge of the subject. There is no place for improvisation, nor formal adhesion, nor the sole intention of

increasing one's personal curriculum. The PDC will not develop or be effective without continued and robust work. All actions carried out to disseminate and/or encourage donation will be perishable and will require permanent review and updating until the program is rooted in the culture.

- **Coherent diffusion.** The dissemination of information (whether for small groups or massively) must be clear, concrete and solid. The knowledge of the topic, the organization of the PDC, the simplicity of the actions required to donate, and conveying respect and transparency must be demonstrated.
- **Effectiveness in the offered service.** PDCs are a benefit to universities but also a service to the community. Therefore, they must demonstrate their gratitude by providing friendly customer service to donors and family members, fluid communication, efficiency in registration and body transfer, and ensuring respectful handling of the bodies.

Surely there are many more aspects to consider depending on the different populations and their cultures. However, we think that sharing these considerations can be useful and facilitate the development of other programs.

There is always a way, we just have to find the right one.