

Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri



Abstract

**DONATION OF THE CORPSE FOR SCIENTIFIC
RESEARCH**

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The Opinion draws attention on a particular modality of donation, and precisely on the possibility of using one's body, after death, both in study and research activities and in educational activities, such as anatomical dissection practices in training and refreshing programs for students and medical doctors. While observing the ethical value of the donation the NBC intends to emphasize the non-ethical acceptability of the provisions of Art. 32 of the "Royal Decree" 31 August 1933, No. 1592 and still in force, namely is using in learning and study activities dead bodies of unidentified people or without family relationships and friendships, to the point that no one requests the burial of the body.

The *post mortem* donation of the body is based on a principle of solidarity towards others, pursued in this case through the promotion of study and research and indirectly through health protection. The key issue is that the donation should be expression of a free and informed decision of the individual; For this reason, the NBC believes that the principle of informed and conscious consent of the donor should be strictly fulfilled and that the mechanism of tacit consent cannot be applied. Moreover, the decision of the individual cannot depend on the consent or lack of opposition of family members, even if it is desirable that the donative choice is shared by the family adequately involved in the various stages, starting from the donor decision-making process. The family members' role may also be important in order to enforce the will of the donor; in this sense the appointment of a trustee, called to fulfill the will of the donor, may also be appropriate.