Fewer than 10 bodies donated to medical research every year
By Pearl Forss, Channel NewsAsia | Posted: 28 January 2009 2045 hrs


SINGAPORE: Fewer than 10 bodies are donated to medical research in Singapore each year. One cancer victim who died on Tuesday decided to pledge her body under the Medical Therapy Education and Research Act.

TV journalist Shin Na was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2005 and on Tuesday, she bid a final farewell to her husband and two children.

Shin has decided to donate her body to medical research, one of about six to nine people who pledge their bodies for donation every year.

In whole body donations, all organs and tissues such as kidney, liver, heart, cornea, lung, bone and skin can be used for research, transplant or education.

This is unlike the opt-out Human Organ Transplant Act, where only the heart, liver, cornea and kidneys are used.

Tony Raza, Shin Na's husband, said: "She would always be focused on things like the environment or recycling or saving energy or helping cases. So in death, as in life, I think she was happy to find a way she could help out. She tells the kids that maybe the research can help find some sort of cure for cancer for other mothers out there.

Donated bodies are sent to the experimental labs of either the National University Hospital or Singapore General Hospital.

The Health Ministry said that autopsies on the donated body can reveal the onset of co-morbid conditions. For example, from autopsies that were performed, doctors now know that blood vessels can harden from cholesterol plaque formed in early adulthood.

Donated bodies have many uses. Besides using bodies to educate doctors on anatomy and surgical operations, tissues can be taken from them to study the function of blood vessels and the effects of drugs on them.

Also, bones, joints and muscles from the donated bodies can be used for research on the mechanical effects of artificial discs or in constructing software that can be used for imaging purposes.

Shin's five-year-old daughter now said she wants to pledge her body too in future.

Because to her, a body is just that, while memories of her mother will live on in her mind.

In an interview recorded in October 2007, Shin Na said: "Since this recurrence, I've made a point of telling her every night when I tuck her, that I will always love her and I will be in her heart. I put my hand on her heart, and I saw that I will always be there, even when I'm not."

In cases where a person had not pledged his organs before passing away, family members could donate his organs upon his death, if they wish to do so.

To do that, next-of-kin can approach the National Organ Transplant Unit (NOTU). - CNA/vm
Would you donate your body for medical purpose after your death?

11 Dec `09, 5:40AM

http://politics.sgforums.com/forums/2215/topics/384304

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Source: http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stori...405425/1/.html