

EEBA STATEMENT ON THE ALTERNATIVE (NON-SURGICAL) USE OF TISSUES THAT ARE NOT SUITABLE FOR TRANSPLANTATION FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL OR TRAINING PURPOSES

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There are cases where corneas are unsuitable for transplantation because of donor medical history or poor biological quality. In addition, as whole eyes are often recovered from donors, the remnants after excision of the corneoscleral disc (lens, sclera, retina, etc.) are often discarded.

The view of the *European Eye Bank Association* (EEBA) is that the use of these tissues for medical research or education and surgical training provides an additional, ethical donation option.

While the availability of such tissues means that scientists can test their hypotheses on more appropriate models, donor families would most likely be comforted to know that the gift of their beloved's eyes had contributed to the progress of medicine. If the central motive for donation is to help patients in need, this should be seen as fulfilling the intentions of the donor families. The benefit for patients in particular, and the population as a whole, would be **immediate** when tissues are suitable for transplantation or **postponed** when tissues are unsuitable and therefore used to develop new therapeutic strategies, more accurate diagnostic assays or better surgical techniques.

Hospitals, universities and tissue banks should have donation schemes that include secondary use for research if tissues do not meet the criteria for therapeutic use. If applicable, the possibility to use tissues for research/training purposes should be made explicit in the donation discussion and endorsed by the consenting party for an effective authorization.

Such programmes must comply with the requirements of voluntary, unpaid donation and anonymity and traceability through the application of specific procedures for consent and request of tissues. If uses of donated tissue for purposes other than transplantation are anticipated, providing specific information and obtaining explicit consent are necessary. It is essential that the wishes of donor families are respected and any restrictions on the use of tissues, such as use by commercial organizations, that are contrary to their personal reasons for agreeing to eye donation.

EEBA supports the distribution of human tissues for research or educational purposes, provided it is carried out according to strict ethical and legal boundaries and fulfils the central motivation for donation by helping patients in need, and gives further value and meaning to one's death or that of a loved one. EEBA believes that guidelines and laws should explicitly allow tissues that are not suitable for transplantation to be used for educational, research and training purposes.

The European Eye Bank Association (EEBA) is a technical-scientific organization comprising individual and institutional members from 27 countries. Founded with the simple objective of sharing information regarding eye banking, the Association is today the leading pan-national association in Europe dedicated to the advancement of eye banking and an authoritative reference point for eye banks wishing to work according to quality standards



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