

Organ recovery after brain death vs. circulatory death



BRAIN DEATH - KEY POINTS

- The patient has irreversible cessation of all brain activity.
- The patient's doctor, who is unaffiliated with potential donation or transplantation, pronounces the donor legally dead.
- The recovery team is not involved in withdrawal or declaration of death.

ORGAN RECOVERY PROCESS

The donor is in a coma. After death is declared, vitals (such as blood pressure and heart rate) are managed by the OPO.

The donor is taken to the OR where organs are recovered. They have already been declared dead prior to organ recovery.

CIRCULATORY DEATH - KEY POINTS

- The patient has irreversible cessation of circulatory function but does not meet brain death criteria.
- Decision to withdraw futile care is made by the hospital physician before donation is discussed.
- The recovery team is not involved in withdrawal or declaration of death.

ORGAN RECOVERY PROCESS

Life support is terminated by the patient's doctor in the operating room, where the donor is then declared dead by the treating doctor (not the OPO or recovery team). Organs may be recovered by the transplant team after death has been declared.

