



## Human bodies for the life: Changing Law in Italy for post mortem donation

After years of discussions and delays, anatomical dissection for research will also be easier in Italy. On January 20, 2020, Italian Parliament definitively approved the text of the law "Rules on the disposition of one's body and post-mortem tissues for study, training and scientific research purposes" <sup>1</sup>.

The new legislation changes the traditional perspective that reserved the use of the dead body for research and study purposes only to "abandoned and neglected corpses": an approach considered non ethical also by the Italian National Bioethics Committee <sup>2</sup>. The post-mortem donation of one's body is an act of solidarity towards others, but it must be free, aware and expressed. Anatomical dissection is an indispensable practice for all medicine and, in particular, for surgical exercise, and several countries opened programs for the donation of bodies <sup>3</sup>. Anatomical dissection offers students the opportunity to learn the three-dimensional relationships of the complex morphology of the human organism; refines manual activities, but above all, encourages human and ethical values by introducing a realistic approach with death and a solidarity vision of life beyond the human species. Experimenting on a human corpse means not only helping "the other" of us, but also significantly reduce the number of animals sacrificed <sup>4</sup>.

A few years after the approval of the law which addresses the complex issue of the everyone's right to choose how he/she comes to the end of life through the mechanism of advance directive <sup>5</sup>, Italy's Parliament takes another step towards confrontation with our finitude, favoring the logic of solidarity and, at the same time, respect for self-determination. This law represents an important advancement not only for science and to improve doctors' training, but to testify the engagement to promote the solidarity as a value that a society worthy of itself needs. Donating the body means performing an act of generosity which, addressing not specifically to someone but, generically, anyone who recognizes

each of us as part of a community and invokes the individual sense of responsibility. However, Italian Judge urged Parliament, another ethically controversial issue, which also obliges us to confront the end of our existence and solidarity: euthanasia <sup>6,7</sup>. The process is probably still long, but the paths of confrontation towards the end of life have begun.

## References

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Rosagemma Ciliberti\*,  
Omar Laurentis\*\*, Marta Licata\*

\*Section of Medicine and Bioethics, Department of Sciences and Health, University of Genoa, Genoa, Italy

\*\*Centre of Research in Osteoarcheology and Paleontology, University of Insubria, Varese, Italy

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#### ERRATA - CORRIGE

In the paper by Okan Murat Akturk, Doğan Yildirim, Mikail Çakir, Yakar Murat Vardar

*“Elevated serum bilirubin levels may predict perforation of the appendix”*

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in the section MATERIAL AND METHODS the second sentence of the first paragraph there was a mistake and the corrected phrase must be read *“The medical reports of patients who were operated for suspected appendicitis between November 2017 and May 2018 were reviewed”*

instead of

*“The medical reports of patients who were operated for suspected appendicitis between April 2016 and April 2018 were reviewed”*