

Policy statement 8 - Organ Harvesting from living Companion Animals

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(adopted by FECAVA Council on 14th October 2006)

1. FECAVA strongly feels that it is unethical to perform an operation on, or to kill, a healthy animal in order to harvest organs for the purposes of transplantation.
2. Currently there is no compelling evidence of the animal welfare benefits to animals receiving transplanted kidneys and other solid organs [1]
3. Future medical, surgical and technological advances might, in theory, enable successful transplants to be performed to the benefit of the recipient.
4. However, in veterinary medicine source animals cannot give informed consent for organ harvesting. This is unlike the situation in man. Therefore it is the view of FECAVA that the only ethical option is to harvest tissues for transplantation from animals that have died [2]

[1] Recipient animals will need chronic oral immunosuppression in order to prevent organ rejection. This is a welfare cost, especially in cats. Furthermore, inability to administer such medication may lead to failure of the transplanted organ and unnecessary suffering.

In the case of feline renal transplantation, there is no statistically significant difference in survival time between cats that have undergone renal transplantation compared with those that have been treated using medical and dietary management. There have been no published long-term studies of long-term adverse effects on uninephrectomised 'source' cats.

[2] For example following a road traffic accident