

## **Ethical Issues in Liver Transplantation: An Introduction**

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### **Introduction**

Now I would like to move on the next part of the symposium, namely ethical issues in liver transplants. This is the area where ethical problems abound. For instance, live liver transplantation has been done in Japan but it is not permitted in certain countries. I have been asked in the past 10 years or so by so many foreign colleagues whenever I have attended meetings, is Japan doing liver transplants. No why not? Because the brain death has not been recognized as legal death. Why? And I said there is some difference between Western countries and Japan in background culture, and so on and so forth, but I want to show what I was talking about. Today I would like to specifically ask Dr. Gyoten to make this point clear. What makes the difference between Western countries and Japan in terms of the delay of early start of liver transplantation. I think that human nature is the same regardless of race and, it comes to an important question of whether we should reach

the same conclusion if enough time is given. I think that there was a time in Japan when all mass media were bent on discrediting physicians saying that moral standard was low, and I think when Japan started to volunteer blood donations mass media should have begun teaching the nation the virtue of donating organs to those who need them very badly, and about altruism, the philosophy of altruism. Mistrust of physicians and surgeons in this country has been one of the major deterrents in the promotion of organ transplantation. I am very keen to hear the comments from our overseas delegates toward Dr. Gyoten's discussion in this regard. And since the time is rather short, I ask the first speaker Dr. Wulff to give his talk on his experiences in Denmark. And we have another guest who has not been in the panel and who is sitting in the right front row, that is Dr. Gayotto, he is currently president of International Association for the Study of the Liver. He was kind enough to be with us today, and I hope he can give some comment during this session.