

China begins phasing out prisoner organs next year

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China will start phasing out its reliance on organs from executed prisoners for transplants early next year as a new national donation system is implemented, a government-appointed expert has said.

Chinese officials acknowledge that a transplantation system that uses mostly organs from death-row prisoners is neither ethical nor sustainable, Wang Haibo said in an interview in the November edition of the [World Health Organization](#)'s journal Bulletin.

An organ donation system run by the Red Cross Society of China has been piloted for two years in 16 regions and is scheduled to be rolled out nationwide by early 2013, Wang said.

"Now there is consensus among China's transplant community that the new system will relinquish the reliance on organs from executed convicts," Wang was quoted as saying in the interview. "The implementation of the new national system will start early next year at the latest. This will also mark the start of phasing out the old practice."

Wang was appointed last year by China's [Health Ministry](#) to lead a center that is researching and designing a system to fairly and efficiently allocate organs to people who need them.

The Health Ministry's media office did not immediately respond to questions that it requested be submitted in a fax. Vice Minister of Health Huang Jiefu was cited by the official [Xinhua News Agency](#) as saying

China will abolish the transplanting of organs from executed prisoners within five years and try to spur more citizens to donate.

[Organ transplantation](#) in China has long been criticized as opaque, profit-driven and unethical. Critics argue death row inmates may feel pressured to become donors, violating personal, religious or [cultural beliefs](#).

China's trial of a national organ donation system aimed at reducing the country's dependence on death row inmates for organs was welcomed by international health and [human rights groups](#).

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