

Law reform in Canada may help curb organ transplant tourism

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Creating a confidential reporting system in Canada about organ transplant tourism could help reduce the practice and disrupt international networks, argues a commentary published in *CMAJ* (*Canadian Medical Association Journal*).

Despite global laws to combat organ transplant tourism—that is, [patients](#) travelling abroad to obtain organs through commercial transactions—the practice persists and has implications for care in home countries like Canada.

The article suggests several ways that physicians can help discourage transplant tourism. For example, if a physician thinks that a patient is considering going outside Canada for a transplant, he or she could discuss the risks with the patient, which include [postoperative complications](#), lack of continuity of care and potential harms to the donor.

"Physicians faced with a patient contemplating transplant tourism may encounter various legal and ethical challenges in determining how much and what kind of care and support to provide, both pre- and postoperatively," write Professor Timothy Caulfield, Health Law Institute, Faculty of Law, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, and Amy Zarzeczny, Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Regina, Regina, Saskatchewan. "However, these interactions also present opportunities for physicians to help discourage this practice."

Physicians cannot disclose a patient's intent to pursue transplant tourism under Canada's patient confidentiality laws. However, reforming the law to allow creation of a [reporting system](#) to collect information about transplant tourism could help curb the practice.

"The goal of a reporting system about transplant tourism would be twofold: first, to collect valuable data needed to improve the understanding of the scope of this phenomenon, and second, to help disrupt the [transplant tourism](#) industry through sharing of information with [law](#) enforcement in the jurisdictions implicated," write the authors.

More information: *Canadian Medical Association Journal*,
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