

Organ donor found not quite brain dead

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<http://www.thelocal.de/20150112/man-found-not-quite-brain-dead-during-operation>

[Note: The surgery ended when the donor's heart stopped beating.
“... the reason the surgery was halted was recorded as being cardiovascular failure”]

The German Medical Association is investigating an incident where surgeons began to operate on a north German man who was not completely brain dead.

Doctors at a hospital in the Bremen/Bremerhaven area had already made an incision in the man's stomach when they realized that he was not brain dead according to medical regulations, the Süddeutsche Zeitung reported on Monday. The surgery was stopped when the problem was discovered.

An insider told the newspaper that "it is quite possible that the man's brain was so damaged that he would not have been able to return to a normal life, but as long as he was not properly diagnosed as brain dead, nobody knows."

A commission of the German Medical Association will begin to review the incident on Monday to determine what happened at the hospital, as well as to discuss the general topic of the ambiguities in diagnosing brain death.

Axel Rumia, Director of the German Foundation for Organ Transplants, which reviews the accuracy of brain death diagnoses before organ donation, said that "for the foundation and for me personally, this is of particular concern" that the diagnosis of brain death be "performed with knowledge of medical science."

The commission must also investigate how doctors handled the discovery. According to documents, the reason the surgery was halted was recorded as being cardiovascular failure.

Investigators must now find out whether the patient's heart stopped by chance, or because doctors readjusted his oxygen levels when they realized he may not be brain dead.