

Provisions on Autopsy of Cadavers of Patients with Infectious Diseases or with Suspected Infectious Diseases

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The Provisions on Autopsy of Cadavers of Patients with Infectious Diseases or with Suspected Infectious Diseases, which were discussed and adopted at the executive meeting of the Ministry of Health on December 16, 2004, are hereby promulgated, and shall come into force on September 1, 2005.

Minister Gao Qiang

April 30, 2005

Provisions on Autopsy of Cadavers of Patients with Infectious Diseases or with Suspected Infectious Diseases

Article 1 These Provisions are formulated in accordance with [Article 46](#) of the “[Law of the People's Republic of China on Prevention and Treatment of Infectious Diseases](#)” (hereinafter referred to as [the Law on Prevention and Treatment of Infectious Diseases](#)) so as to timely find out the causes of infectious diseases, improve the proficiency of diagnosis and treatment of infectious diseases, effectively control infectious diseases from spreading, and prevent the epidemic situation from extending.

Article 2 These Provisions shall apply to the autopsy of cadavers of patients with infectious diseases or with suspected infectious diseases, with the causes of which being unclear.

Article 3 The autopsy of the cadaver of a patient with an infectious disease or with a suspected infectious disease shall be carried out within an institution which is designated by the health administrative department and which has the eligibility for autopsy of cadavers of patients with infectious diseases (hereinafter referred to as autopsy institution).

A health administrative department at the level of city divided into districts or above shall, in light of the actual needs in prevention and treatment of infectious diseases within its own jurisdiction, designate a medical institution having independent capacity of pathological anatomy or a common institution of higher education having the department of pathology or department of forensic medicine as the autopsy institution.

Other institutions which engage in autopsy of cadavers of patients with Category A infectious diseases or with suspected Category A infectious diseases or which take measures of preventing and controlling Category A infectious diseases shall be designated by the health administrative department at the provincial level or above.

Article 4 An autopsy institution shall meet the following conditions:

- (1) Having an independent autopsy room and corresponding auxiliary rooms, which have reasonable flow of people, flow of articles, and ventilation, and have enough daylighting, with the area of the autopsy room being not less than 15 square meters;
- (2) Having the autopsy platform, slicing machine, dewaterer, suction utensil, microscope, photographic devices, metrological devices, isolation equipment for disinfection, individual protection devices, pathological tissue drawing worktable, necessary equipment for storing or carrying specimens, cadaver preservation facilities, and sewerage and pollutant treatment facilities meeting environmental protection requirements;
- (3) Having at least two doctors with associate senior qualification or above for holding a pathological professional post, among whom, one shall be a doctor with senior qualification for holding a pathological professional post and shall act as the principal examiner;
- (4) Having well-developed rules and regularized technical operation norms, and holding trainings and assessments for its working personnel at regular intervals; and
- (5) Having the emergency response plan for autopsy and occupational exposure.

The autopsy room of an institution that engages in autopsy of cadavers of patients with Category A infectious diseases or with suspected Category A infectious diseases or which take measures of preventing and controlling Category A infectious diseases shall simultaneously have the capacity of disinfecting the outgoing air by filtration.

Article 5 A medical institution may, in order to find out the cause of an infectious disease, and upon approval of the local health administrative department at the level of city divided into districts, make autopsy of a patient with an infectious disease or suspected infectious disease who died in the medical institution, and shall inform the decedent's family members, and make records as well.

Article 6 A disease prevention and control institution shall, after receipt of the notice of a relevant

department, take isolating measures for disinfection of the cadaver of a patient who died out of the medical institution and who has the feature of an infectious disease. If the said institution needs to find out the cause of the infectious disease, it may, upon approval of the local health administrative department at the level of city divided into districts, carry out autopsy, and shall inform the decedent's family members, and make records as well.

Article 7 The autopsy shall be generally carried out in the nearby autopsy institution, and the cadaver involved shall be carried with a special vehicle to the autopsy institution in accordance with the provisions of the local health administrative department.

Article 8 Except for the needs in autopsy, no entity or individual shall move, wash, bury, cremate a cadaver in need of autopsy, change its clothes, or deal with it in other ways.

Article 9 A medical institution shall provide the autopsy institution with photocopies of the clinic information, and hand over all the things involved to the autopsy institution.

Article 10 An autopsy institution shall designate a principal examiner. A cadaver examiner shall, prior to the autopsy, carefully consult the relevant clinic information.

Article 11 The autopsy shall be in strict accordance with the relevant technical operation rules and practices, and conform to the provisions on prevention and control of infectious diseases.

The collection, storage, carriage and transport of specimens in autopsy shall be governed by the “Regulation on the Bio-safety Management of Pathogenic Microbe Labs” and other relevant provisions.

A specimen collected in the process of autopsy shall be inspected in a laboratory meeting biological safety requirements.

Article 12 In the process of autopsy, the examiners shall treat the medical wastes in accordance with the “[Regulation on the Administration of Medical Wastes](#)” and other relevant provisions.

Article 13 The autopsy pathological professionals shall, in the whole process of autopsy, take standard prevention and protection measures, strictly abide by the relevant technical operation rules, and take effective measures to prevent cross-infection, environmental pollution, or spread of any epidemic disease. An autopsy institution shall do a good job in monitoring the health of relevant professionals.

Article 14 An autopsy institution shall issue the primary autopsy report as soon as possible, and timely feed it back to the corresponding medical institution, disease prevention and control institution or health administrative department.

The medical institution shall, according to the primary autopsy report, the pathological report and the pathogenic inspection report, and by colligating the clinic symptom, make clear diagnosis as soon as possible, and report to the relevant administrative department in accordance with the provisions.

Article 15 After the autopsy, the pathological professionals shall sew up and clean up the cadaver.

The autopsy institution shall carry out strict disinfection treatment for the cadaver, the autopsy site and the surrounding environment under the guidance of the local disease prevention and control institution or in light of the sanitary requirements proposed thereby.

The cadavers left from autopsy shall, after sanitary treatment, be cremated or buried deep in earth in accordance with relevant provisions.

Article 16 The places, special means of transport for placing cadavers of patients with infectious diseases or suspected infectious diseases, and the monomer refrigerator used for such purpose shall all be strictly disinfected in accordance with the relevant provisions.

Article 17 Where any relevant entity or individual violates these Provisions and is under any of the following circumstances, it/he shall be punished by the health administrative department in accordance with the “[Law on Prevention and Treatment of Infectious Diseases](#)”, the “[Law on Practicing Doctors](#)”, the “[Regulation on the Administration of Medical Institutions](#)” and other relevant laws and regulations, and the liable persons in charge and other directly liable persons shall be imposed upon administrative sanctions; if any severe consequence is caused and a crime is constituted, the said entity or individual shall be subject to criminal liabilities in accordance with law.

- (1) Without approval, a medical institution unlawfully carries out autopsy on the cadaver of a patient whose cause of disease is unclear and who has the infectious disease feature;
- (2) An autopsy institution and its working personnel fail to, in the process of autopsy, follow the provisions to take effective measures of disinfection, prevention, or isolation, etc.;
- (3) An autopsy institution or any of its working personnel issues a false autopsy report;
- (4) An autopsy institution fails to perform its autopsy duties in accordance with the provisions; or
- (5) Other illegal circumstances prescribed in any law or administrative regulation.

Article 18 For the sake of finding out the cause of an infectious disease and carrying out autopsy of the cadavers of patients with an infectious disease or with a suspected infectious disease in accordance with the “[Law on Prevention and Treatment of Infectious Diseases](#)”, the health administrative department shall guarantee the expenses for this work, and take effective sanitary

prevention measures and medical treatment and care measures for the working personnel.

Article 19 These Provisions shall come into force on September 1, 2005.

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