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Body Donation for Science and Medical Education: Ethical Challenges and Institutional Proposals from a Humanizing Perspective. Experience at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

Donación de Cuerpos para la Ciencia y Educación Médica: Desafíos Éticos y Propuestas Institucionales desde una Perspectiva Humanizante. Experiencia en la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

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SUMMARY: This article examines body donation for science and medical education through a qualitative narrative review with a documentary case-study component. Drawing on academic literature, regulatory and professional documents, and publicly accessible institutional materials, the study develops an analytical framework for examining body donation programs through three guiding axes: the donated body as a pedagogical agent, as an ethical postmortem subject, and as a symbol of institutional memory. This article was designed as a qualitative narrative review with a documentary case-study component. From this framework, the analysis identifies recurrent dimensions in the literature, including pedagogical humanization, informed consent, traceability, memorialization, governance, and institutional accountability. The article then situates these dimensions in the Chilean context, highlighting the ethical and organizational implications of operating in the absence of a comprehensive regulatory framework. Within this setting, the experience of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile is examined as a documentary case that makes visible how body donation practices are institutionally articulated in relation to consent, traceability, commemorative recognition, and ethical formation. The study shows how body donation programs can be understood not only as technical arrangements for anatomy teaching, but as institutional practices in which science, pedagogy, ethics, and memory are closely intertwined.

KEY WORDS: Body donation; Bioethics; Medical education; Traceability.

INTRODUCTION

Body donation for scientific and educational purposes remains a key component of anatomy teaching and medical training, but its justification and regulation vary across cultural and legal settings (Orsini *et al*., 2021). For that reason, the practice is not only a technical or administrative matter: it also raises recurring ethical, legal, and pedagogical questions about consent, use, respect, and institutional responsibility (Zhang & Ma, 2020).

From a legal standpoint, there is no single, universally accepted way of classifying the human cadaver (Brenner *et al*., 2024). In some doctrinal discussions, particularly in civil-law scholarship, the body has been described as a special legal object, reflecting that it receives differentiated legal protection and cannot be treated as an ordinary object of property or free commerce (Guzmán, 2018). This notion should therefore be understood as a situated legal construction rather than as a general rule applicable across jurisdictions. More broadly, the debate reflects a tension between object-based or patrimonial approaches, which regulate the body mainly through rules of custody and protection, and approaches that emphasize its continuing moral and biographical significance. This latter perspective may be enriched by a "Ricoeurian" understanding of lived experience and narrative identity, which helps to interpret the postmortem body as remaining symbolically connected to the life once lived, without reducing it to mere materiality (Ricoeur, 2003).

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In applied bioethics, a substantial body of literature has converged on practical criteria for body donation programs, especially dignity, traceability, and informed consent (Porzionato *et al*., 2012; Ciliberti *et al*., 2021; Balta *et al*., 2025). Within this ethical convergence, the donated body is increasingly discussed not merely as instructional material, but as a human remainder embedded in relationships, meanings, and institutional duties (Leeper *et al*., 2024). In parallel, medical pedagogy has incorporated the figure of the "silent teacher" to recognize that the educational role of the donated body exceeds technical training and includes the formation of professional attitudes toward death, care, and respect (Leeper *et al*., 2024).

In Chile, these debates acquire particular relevance because body donation for teaching and research has developed without a comprehensive legal framework specifically designed for this field. As a result, institutions must operate within a fragmented normative environment while still responding to demands for ethical oversight, pedagogical legitimacy, and respectful treatment of donors. Recent national guidance has sought to address this gap by proposing protocols that integrate consent procedures, traceability, anonymity, and symbolic forms of recognition, thereby framing donation as a practice that requires care, memory, and gratitude rather than simple technical management (SCHA, 2023).

Historically, the sources of bodies used in anatomical education have changed alongside broader social transformations; in earlier periods, bodies were often obtained from unclaimed deceased, whereas more recent programs have developed around voluntary donation and formalized procedures (da Rocha *et al*., 2013). This shift has encouraged the creation of more standardized mechanisms for procurement, use, and institutional accountability, while also foregrounding the motives and expectations of donors themselves. In that context, body donation can be examined not only as a regulatory issue but also as an altruistic social practice shaped by trust, cultural meaning, and educational purpose (da Rocha *et al*., 2017; Gürses *et al*., 2019).

Against this background, this article offers a narrative review of academic, regulatory, and experiential literature on body donation for educational purposes, to identify the main ethical, symbolic, and pedagogical tensions in the field. On that basis, it develops an analytical framework for examining body donation programs in the Chilean context and uses the experience of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (PUC) as a case study through which to assess how those tensions are addressed at the institutional level. The article aims to critically situate one institutional experience within broader international debates and local regulatory limitations.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Design

This article was designed as a qualitative narrative review with a documentary case-study component. A narrative review was selected because it enables the integration and critical synthesis of heterogeneous sources that converge in the study of body donation, including academic literature, regulatory frameworks, and institutional documents. This design makes it possible to examine how ethical, legal, pedagogical, and symbolic concerns have been articulated across different types of materials and to organize those concerns into an analytical framework relevant to the Chilean context.

The study was guided by three analytical axes: the donated body as a pedagogical agent, as an ethical postmortem subject, and as a symbol of institutional memory. These axes provided the perspective through which the sources were read, related, and interpreted. Within this design, the experience of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile was incorporated as a documentary case study through which the broader debates identified in the review could be examined in a specific institutional and regional setting.

The documentary component of the study was informed by documentary analysis understood as a process of accessing, organizing, relating, and interpreting available materials in order to construct knowledge and produce a reasoned understanding of a research problem, rather than merely retrieving information. This perspective was particularly suited to the aims of the study, since it allowed conceptually diverse sources to be brought into dialogue and examined in light of a shared analytical framework.

Search Strategy, Source Types, and Eligibility Criteria

The review drew on three types of materials. First, academic literature in bioethics, medical education, philosophy of the body, and health law was examined in order to identify the main ethical, legal, and pedagogical debates surrounding body donation. Second, regulatory and professional documents were considered when they provided guidance, recommendations, or normative criteria relevant to body donation programs. Third, publicly accessible institutional materials from universities and professional bodies were reviewed when they described body donation policies, procedures, commemorative practices, or governance arrangements.

The selection of sources was guided by the analytical focus of the study and by their relevance to the questions

under examination. Priority was given to materials addressing one or more of the following dimensions: informed consent, traceability, governance and ethical oversight, pedagogical use of donated bodies, relationship with families, memorialization, non-commercialization, and final disposition. In this way, the corpus was configured to capture the principal ethical, pedagogical, and institutional concerns through which body donation programs are discussed and assessed in the literature and in documentary sources.

Analytical Procedure

The selected sources were read in full and analytically organized considering the three guiding axes of the study: the donated body as a pedagogical agent, as an ethical postmortem subject, and as a symbol of institutional memory. These axes provided the initial framework for relating the reviewed materials and for identifying the main lines of convergence across academic, regulatory, and institutional sources (Table I).

Through this analytical reading, recurrent concerns, normative criteria, and institutional responses were identified and progressively translated into more specific analytical dimensions. These dimensions included informed consent, traceability, governance and ethical oversight, pedagogical use, relationship with families, memorialization, non-commercialization, and final disposition. For purposes of analysis and presentation, these dimensions were subsequently grouped into broader thematic clusters that structure the Results section.

Within this framework, the case of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile was examined through the same analytical dimensions. This procedure made it possible to connect the narrative review with the documentary case study and to assess how the ethical, pedagogical, and institutional dimensions identified across the reviewed sources take shape in a specific institutional context.

RESULTS

Best-practice framework from the narrative review

a. The human body as a pedagogical agent. The dissection has been an essential formative practice in medicine from classical Greece to the modern era; by consolidating a pedagogy of the body that transcends technique, teaching human anatomy through the dissection of real bodies has historically been one of the fundamental pillars of medical education. Despite the development of digital technologies and three-dimensional models, the cadaver remains the most complete pedagogical agent for training professionals with a deep and respectful understanding of the human body. This traditional methodology confronts students with visual cues essential for learning and improves the participation and enthusiasm

Table I. Analytical categories guiding the review and case-study examination.

Guiding axis	Analytical category	Descriptive focus
Donated body as a pedagogical agent	Pedagogical use	Examines how donated bodies are incorporated into anatomy teaching, professional formation, and humanizing educational practices.
Donated body as an ethical postmortem subject	Informed consent	Considers whether donation is supported by clear, explicit, and ethically robust authorization processes.
Donated body as an ethical postmortem subject	Non-commercialization	Examines whether the donated body is kept outside market logics and treated under principles of stewardship and respect.
Donated body as an ethical postmortem subject	Final disposition	Considers how post-use procedures are regulated and whether they are consistent with dignity and prior consent.
Donated body as an ethical postmortem subject / institutional memory	Relationship with families	Examines how programs address communication, accompaniment, and recognition in relation to donors' relatives.
Donated body as a symbol of institutional memory	Memorialization	Assesses whether the program incorporates symbolic or commemorative practices that acknowledge the donor's contribution.
Donated body as a symbol of institutional memory / governance	Traceability	Examines whether the institutional trajectory of the donated body can be followed from reception to final disposition.
Donated body as a symbol of institutional memory / governance	Governance and ethical oversight	Considers the existence of rules, responsibilities, safeguards, and oversight mechanisms that regulate institutional practice.

of the learner (Pather, 2015). Anatomical teaching not only transmits technical knowledge but also activates complex cognitive skills linked to spatial and clinical reasoning (Farfan & Inzunza, 2023).

Empirical studies have demonstrated that the practice of dissection allows for the development of more precise psychomotor skills, better spatial orientation, and greater capacity for clinical reasoning. The pedagogy based on prosections and dissections, as proposed by Pather (2015), enables comprehensive ethical and technical training, in which the body teaches from its silent presence. More recently, it has been described that surgical training on cadavers improves performance in the operating room and that direct contact with the body promotes attitudes of respect and humility, which are essential for the ethical practice of medicine.

From a formative perspective, the human body not only teaches anatomy but also shapes medical consciousness. Interaction with the cadaver confronts students with finitude, fragility, and value, generating a pedagogical experience that transcends the cognitive experience. Therefore, various faculties have incorporated opening and closing academic ceremonies, tributes to donors, and interdisciplinary reflective activities that promote humanizing pedagogy (da Rocha *et al*., 2020; Orsini *et al*., 2021). Beyond its technical role in anatomy teaching, the donated body is also described in the literature as a presence that shapes professional attitudes, ethical awareness, and humanizing forms of medical education.

b. Ethical postmortem dignity and subjecthood. Although the cadaver does not legally possess a legal personality, on the ethical plane, it retains a symbolic and relational dimension that makes it a passive subject of respect (Guzmán, 2018). This conception surpasses the patrimonial vision and recognizes the body as testimony of an existence that demands a "just memory" that honors its singularity (Ricoeur, 2003).

Contemporary bioethics has embraced this view, understanding the postmortem body as a relational good that summons the academic community to care for and signify it (Ciliberti *et al*., 2021). In the anatomical field, this perspective translates into institutional practices such as farewell ceremonies, thank-you letters, and moments of silence, which protect the body as an ethical subject that teaches from its anonymity (Orsini *et al*., 2021). This ethical understanding of the donated body also has institutional implications, since postmortem respect must be expressed not only in discourse but also in procedures, safeguards, and forms of recognition.

c. The body as a symbol of institutional memory. Various international experiences have demonstrated that donation programs that integrate symbolic practices generate positive effects on the ethical and emotional formation of students. In Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Italy, Canada, and South Korea, commemorative ceremonies, the delivery of symbolic certificates, tree plantings, and the creation of public memorials have been implemented to strengthen the institutional culture of gratitude (Ciliberti *et al*., 2021; Orsini *et al*., 2021; Jenkin & Keay, 2025).

In Chile, the Guidelines of the Chilean Society of Anatomy (SCHA, 2023), propose adopting these practices, including public ceremonies, books of gratitude, and spaces for contemplation. These actions transform the donated body into a site of institutional memory, where not only anatomy but also gratitude and respect are learned. Together, these dimensions suggest that ethically robust body donation programs depend not on a single criterion, but on the articulation of pedagogical, ethical, procedural, and memorial practices within a coherent institutional framework.

Body donation in the Chilean context

Within the broader ethical, pedagogical, and institutional dimensions identified in the narrative review, the Chilean context presents a particularly relevant setting in which important normative aspirations coexist with a still limited and fragmented regulatory structure. Although body donation for teaching and scientific purposes has gained increasing ethical and academic visibility, Chile does not yet have a specific legal framework governing the full trajectory of the donated body, from consent and reception to traceability, use, memorialization, and final disposition. This regulatory gap has practical and institutional consequences. While the Chilean Sanitary Code addresses the disposition of the body (art. 146), it does not regulate several dimensions that the international literature and professional guidance increasingly regard as central to ethically robust donation programs, including anonymity, traceability, procedural oversight, and symbolic recognition of the donor. The fragility of this framework was also made visible in document No. 089906N14 of the Office of the Comptroller General, which prohibited the importation of anatomical preparations without sanitary authorization, thereby illustrating the legal and administrative limitations surrounding the circulation and institutional handling of human remains.

At the same time, recent efforts within the Chilean anatomical community indicate a growing awareness of these deficiencies. In particular, the Guidelines of the

Chilean Society of Anatomy (SCHA, 2023) propose a more comprehensive approach to body donation, incorporating criteria such as ritualized respect, traceability, anonymity, and institutional memory. These recommendations do not replace legislation, but they do provide an important reference point for understanding how ethical and pedagogical expectations are being articulated in the absence of a more fully developed national framework.

The Chilean context illustrates how institutions must address ethical and organizational demands that lack clear regulatory frameworks. Consequently, this setting provides the basis to examine how the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile has structured its body donation practices within these national constraints.

Documentary case: Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

Against this national background, the experience of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile can be examined as a documentary case through which the institutional articulation of body donation practices becomes visible in a specific Chilean setting. As reflected in the reviewed materials, the program brings together several elements that are recurrently identified in the literature as ethically and pedagogically relevant, including informed consent, traceability, commemorative recognition, and the incorporation of reflective practices into anatomy teaching.

Within this institutional approach, the donated body is framed not only as anatomical material for instruction, but also as a pedagogical presence associated with respect, gratitude, and professional formation. In this sense, the case reflects a pedagogical understanding of the donor as a "silent teacher," consistent with broader discussions that link anatomical education to ethical formation and symbolic recognition (Orsini *et al*., 2021).

The documentary materials further indicate that this approach is translated into several types of institutional practices. These include, first, the use of informed consent procedures and traceability mechanisms aimed at structuring the donation process through defined protocols, ethical supervision, and communication with family members. Second, the program incorporates commemorative ceremonies involving students, faculty, and institutional authorities, thereby situating the act of donation within a framework of public gratitude and recognition. Third, symbolic spaces for tribute and reflection have been created to preserve the memory of donors as part of the institution's pedagogical and ethical identity. Fourth, the anatomical experience is accompanied by reflective and formative activities that seek to integrate bioethical, emotional, and humanizing dimensions into medical education.

These components make the PUC experience a relevant institutional case for examining how the dimensions identified in the narrative review take shape in practice within the Chilean context. At the same time, considered as a documentary case, its value at this stage lies primarily in making visible the configuration of these practices and the way they are institutionally articulated.

Analytical appraisal of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile case

When examined through the analytical framework developed from the narrative review, the case of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile shows points of convergence with several of the dimensions identified in the literature. As reflected in the reviewed materials, the program articulates informed consent, traceability, commemorative practices, symbolic spaces, and reflective training activities in ways that situate body donation within a broader ethical and pedagogical framework rather than as a merely technical or administrative process (Orsini *et al*., 2021).

From the perspective of pedagogical humanization, the PUC case appears to align with the literature that understands the donated body as a "silent teacher" and anatomical education as a formative experience that includes gratitude, responsibility, and care. The incorporation of ceremonies, reflective activities, and symbolic spaces suggests an effort to integrate the emotional, ethical, and educational dimensions of the anatomical encounter into institutional practice (Orsini *et al*., 2021). In this respect, the case illustrates how the pedagogical and memorial dimensions identified in the review can be brought together within a university setting.

The case description also indicates alignment with dimensions related to procedural organization, particularly informed consent, traceability, and ethical supervision. These elements are presented as part of a structured institutional approach to the donation process and are consistent with the emphasis placed in the literature on transparency, oversight, and respect for the donor throughout the institutional trajectory of the body (IFAA, 2012; Myers-Kelley *et al*., 2025). At the same time, the case is particularly relevant in the Chilean context, where such dimensions are only partially addressed at the regulatory level.

At the institutional level, the PUC experience also gives visibility to dimensions that extend beyond the initial act of donation, especially those concerning memorialization,

symbolic recognition, and the incorporation of ethical reflection into academic training. In this sense, the case supports the broader argument that body donation programs should be understood not only in terms of consent and use, but also in relation to institutional memory and the cultivation of a culture of respect.

At the same time, the analytical value of the case lies in the questions it helps to foreground. The broader literature reviewed in this study indicates that the ethical consistency of body donation programs also depends on processes of ongoing evaluation, continuous training of academic teams, student participation, and transparency in institutional accountability (IFAA, 2012; Orsini *et al*., 2021; Myers-Kelley *et al*., 2025). Considered in light of these dimensions, the PUC case can be read as a relevant institutional experience through which the implementation of body donation practices may be examined, while also pointing to the importance of continuous review and ethical assessment as part of an evolving institutional culture of care.

Accordingly, the significance of the PUC case within this study lies in its value as a situated institutional experience that makes visible how several of the analytical dimensions identified in the review may be articulated in practice in the Chilean context. The case provides a basis for examining how body donation programs can connect science, ethics, pedagogy, and memory within a specific institutional setting (Ok & Gürses, 2021; Zhang *et al*., 2023; Sˇink *et al*., 2024).

DISCUSSION

Body donation as an integrated ethical, pedagogical, and institutional practice

The results of this study suggest that body donation for science and medical education cannot be reduced to a logistical function within anatomy teaching. Rather, it emerges as a practice in which pedagogical value, postmortem dignity, procedural safeguards, and institutional memory converge, requiring a coherent ethical response from the academic community (Hutchinson *et al*., 2020). Read in this way, the donated body is not exhausted by its sanitary or material status. As Guzmán (2018) argues, the cadaver retains an ethical dimension that demands respect, while Ricoeur's (2003), notion of "just memory" helps to frame donation as a relationship that continues to call for recognition after death. This perspective is consistent with contemporary bioethical approaches that understand the postmortem body as a relational good whose educational use must remain linked to dignity, transparency, and care (Ciliberti *et al*., 2021).

From this standpoint, the main contribution of the analytical framework developed in this study lies in showing that ethically sound body donation programs are not defined by a single criterion, but by the articulation of several dimensions that are often treated separately in practice. Informed consent, traceability, memorialization, pedagogical humanization, and institutional oversight should therefore be understood not as parallel components, but as interdependent expressions of the same ethical commitment. In this sense, procedural organization is not external to respect for the donor; rather, it is one of the institutional forms through which that respect becomes visible and operational (IFAA, 2012; Ciliberti *et al*., 2021).

The Chilean context: between normative aspiration and regulatory fragmentation

The Chilean context reveals a persistent tension between the growing ethical expectations surrounding body donation and the limited regulatory tools currently available to sustain them. Although the existing legal framework addresses certain aspects of bodily disposition, it does not provide a comprehensive basis for matters such as traceability, anonymity, institutional accountability, or symbolic recognition. In comparative terms, this contrasts with jurisdictions that have developed more explicit legislative or procedural frameworks, such as Italy's 2020 law and associated institutional protocols, or national models in which cadaveric training and donor recognition have been incorporated into broader educational policy (Bolcato *et al*., 2021; Ciliberti *et al*., 2021). Likewise, international experience suggests that donor registries, commemorative practices, and clearer governance structures can help consolidate public trust and a culture of respect around donation (Strkalj *et al*., 2021).

The Chilean case supports the view that ethical aspiration alone is insufficient without a normative and institutional environment capable of sustaining it (Balta *et al*., 2025). The findings therefore point to several priorities for Chilean institutions and policymakers: the development of a specific legal framework for body donation for teaching and scientific purposes; the creation of a national donor registry; the strengthening of institutional ethics committees responsible for supervising the process; the incorporation of ethical and symbolic reflection into academic programs; the adaptation and dissemination of international guidance; and the institutional recognition of donor memory through commemorative and pedagogical practices. Together, these measures would not only improve procedural clarity but also help align national practice, with the ethical and symbolic demands increasingly associated with body donation.

The Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile case as a situated institutional experience

Within this fragmented context, the case of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile is analytically valuable because it makes visible how an institution can attempt to connect consent, traceability, pedagogical humanization, and memorial practices within a more coherent programmatic design. As a situated institutional experience, the case supports approaches that link body donation to relational bioethics and humanizing pedagogy, in which the donor is recognized not only as a source of anatomical learning but also as a presence that shapes institutional ethics and professional formation (Ok & Gürses, 2021; Zhang *et al*., 2023; Ottone *et al*., 2026). In this sense, the PUC case is analytically valuable as a concrete institutional setting in which the possibilities and tensions of body donation programs can be examined.

At the same time, the interpretive value of the case depends precisely on not treating it as a universally transferable solution. The broader literature reviewed in this study indicates that the ethical consistency of body donation programs also depends on ongoing evaluation, the continued training of academic teams, student participation, and transparent accountability to institutional and ethical bodies (IFAA, 2012; Orsini *et al*., 2021; Myers-Kelley *et al*., 2025). These dimensions are important because they shift attention from the formal existence of a program to its sustained institutional quality over time. Read in this way, the PUC case is most useful not as a definitive template, but as a concrete setting in which the possibilities and unresolved tensions of body donation programs can be critically examined.

Toward an institutional culture of care

The investigation also suggests that body donation programs should be understood as evolving institutional processes rather than as fixed administrative arrangements. Their legitimacy depends on the capacity to review procedures, accompany students and academic teams, maintain accountability, and preserve donor memory as a living dimension of institutional practice (IFAA, 2012; Orsini et al., 2021; Myers-Kelley et al., 2025). Continuous improvement is therefore not an accessory feature of these programs, but part of their ethical architecture.

A further point concerns the scope of the present study. Because the case-study component is documentary in nature, the article makes it possible to examine how body donation is conceptually framed and institutionally presented, but it can only assess implementation to the extent that this is visible in the reviewed materials. Even so, the study provides a framework for examining body donation programs in Chile and contributes to a broader discussion linking legal regulation, pedagogical practice, ethical reflection, and institutional memory.

LIMITATIONS

This study is situated in the Chilean context, where body donation for science and medical education develops within a specific legal, cultural, and institutional environment. For that reason, the analytical framework proposed here is grounded in a national setting that gives particular relevance to questions of regulatory fragmentation, institutional responsibility, and symbolic recognition. At the same time, the documentary case-study component focuses on publicly accessible institutional materials. This perspective makes it possible to examine how body donation is conceptually framed, institutionally organized, and ethically presented within a specific university setting, while emphasizing the value of documentary analysis for understanding the articulation between discourse, procedures, and institutional memory. The study therefore contributes a context-sensitive framework for examining body donation programs and for relating ethical, pedagogical, and institutional dimensions that are often treated separately. Its scope lies in offering an analytically grounded reading of the Chilean case and in situating one institutional experience within broader debates on consent, traceability, memorialization, and professional formation.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined body donation for science and medical education as an ethical, pedagogical, and institutional practice that extends beyond the technical provision of cadaveric material for teaching. Through a qualitative narrative review and a documentary case-study component, the analysis identified a set of recurrent dimensions—pedagogical humanization, postmortem dignity, informed consent, traceability, memorialization, and institutional oversight—through which body donation programs can be more clearly understood and assessed.

In the Chilean context, these dimensions acquire particular significance because body donation programs continue to develop within a fragmented regulatory environment. The study therefore contributes an analytical framework for examining how ethical, pedagogical, and institutional concerns are articulated in this field and for situating local experiences within broader international debates.

Within this context, the case of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile shows how body donation practices may be institutionally organized around consent, traceability, commemorative recognition, and ethical formation. Its value in this study lies in making visible the practical articulation of these dimensions within a specific university setting and in illustrating how science, pedagogy, ethics, and memory can be brought into relation through institutional practice.

Taken together, these findings support the need for clearer regulatory frameworks, stronger institutional procedures, and educational practices that recognize the donated body not only as an object of study, but also as a locus of memory, respect, and professional formation.

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FARFÁN, E. & RAMOS, P. Donación de cuerpos para la ciencia y educación médica: Desafíos éticos y propuestas institucionales desde una perspectiva humanizante. Experiencia en la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. *Int. J. Morphol., 44(4)*:1350-1358, 2026.

RESUMEN: Este artículo examina la donación de cuerpos para la ciencia y la formación médica mediante una revisión narrativa cualitativa que incluye un estudio de caso documental. A partir de la literatura académica, documentos normativos y profesionales, y materiales institucionales de acceso público, el estudio desarrolla un marco analítico para examinar los programas de donación de cuerpos a través de tres ejes rectores: el cuerpo donado como agente pedagógico, como sujeto ético post mortem y como símbolo de la memoria institucional. Este artículo se diseñó como una revisión narrativa cualitativa con un componente de estudio de caso documental. A partir de este marco, el análisis identifica dimensiones recurrentes en la literatura, entre ellas la humanización pedagógica, el consentimiento informado, la trazabilidad, la conmemoración, la gobernanza y la responsabilidad institucional. A continuación, el artículo sitúa estas dimensiones en el contexto chileno, destacando las implicaciones éticas y organizativas de operar en ausencia de un marco normativo integral. En este contexto, se examina la experiencia de la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile como un caso documental que pone de manifiesto cómo las prácticas de donación de cuerpos se articulan institucionalmente en relación con el consentimiento, la trazabilidad, el reconocimiento conmemorativo y la formación ética. El estudio muestra cómo los programas de donación de cuerpos pueden entenderse no solo como disposiciones técnicas para la enseñanza de la anatomía, sino como prácticas institucionales en las que la ciencia, la pedagogía, la ética y la memoria están estrechamente entrelazadas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Donación de cuerpos; Bioética; Educación médica; Trazabilidad.

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