

World's First Organ Donation After Self-Administered VAD Reported in Australia Transplant Science

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An Australian woman has reportedly become the first person in the world to donate organs after self-administering oral voluntary assisted dying (VAD) medication in early 2026. Karen Duncan, 55, who was living with motor neurone disease (MND), donated her lungs, kidneys, heart valve, and corneas after passing away in hospital following the administration of oral VAD medication.

The case represents a global first and an important development in both end-of-life care and transplantation. This marks the first reported case of organ donation by VAD patients following self-administered medication, rather than physician-assisted dying (PAD).

Medical experts say the case may open a new pathway for organ donation, but it also highlights the need for careful ethical safeguards. Specialists emphasized that the decision to access VAD must remain separate from the decision to donate organs, so that patients are not pressured in any way.

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