Introduction:
The clinical management of potential organ donors constitutes a challenge. Since targets and interventions are multiple and pertain to all physiological systems, caregivers may consider clinical practice guidelines as a precious tool. The objective of this systematic review was to identify clinical practice guidelines in order to describe practices around the world. High variability in practices among countries was expected. Findings will permit to identify the needs for future research.

Methods:
We conducted a systematic review of clinical practice guidelines on the management of adult and paediatric brain dead organ donors. An electronic search strategy was conducted, using MeSh terms and appropriate key words, in 11 databases, from the earliest accessible date. A manual search was also conducted in Google in 9 different languages. Specific national transplantation organizations were directly contacted according to IRODAT data. Titles and abstracts were screened in duplicated and 2 independent reviewers abstracted data using a pre-tested data collection form. Quality of publications was assessed using the AGREE-II instrument.

Results:
The search strategy using combined databases yielded 18,485 entries from which 8 guidelines were included. Combined with the results of the manual search, 25 clinical practice guidelines from 19 countries were finally included. We collected data on 7 predetermined clinical domains. Important heterogeneity in recommendations was found, particularly in the hemodynamic management, targets and monitoring as well as hormone replacement therapy domains. The majority of recommendations concerned adult donors only. The publications were in majority judged of low quality.

Conclusion:
This review on the management of brain dead organ donor management highlights the high heterogeneity of recommendations and low methodological quality in guidelines around the world. Improvement in recommendations depends largely on future evidence-based studies.