

Harvest of baby organs is 'like a sci-fi film plot'

By Sian Harrison

CAMPAIGNERS have described the suggestion of mothers giving birth to severely disabled babies so their organs can be donated as "like something out of a science fiction movie".

A move to use organs from babies diagnosed at an early stage with defects which mean they will not survive after birth has been criticised by charities.

Mark Bhagwandin, senior education officer for Life, the pro-life charity, said: "My initial reaction is it sounds like something out of a science fiction movie."

The proposal, discussed at a recent meeting of the British Transplantation Society, would see women supported by the NHS to carry their baby to term, so its organs develop fully.

Mr Bhagwandin said such severely disabled babies should not be considered a "means to an end" or used as a "quick fix" to address the shortage of donors.

He said that he and his wife lost a child through miscarriage at six months.

"We went through those months with the hope that she would survive," he said. "Had we been told that we should go through with

the pregnancy, just so that her organs could be taken, we would have been very shocked and angry at anyone who suggested that, because we regarded our child as a human being who deserved respect - despite her life only lasting six months.

"We would never have regarded her as a means to an end." He added: "There is a distinction between people

'There's a distinction between willingly donating organs and this. Babies can't have a say'

willingly donating their organs and this, because, of course, babies can't have a say."

NHS Blood and Transplant said it would know about an unborn baby with a fatal defect only if the mother was referred to it by clinicians, having expressed a wish for its organs to be donated.

A spokesman said: "Under no circumstances would NHS Blood and Transplant staff, or anybody else within the NHS, pressure women to continue with a pregnancy solely for the possibility of organ donation."

Daily Telegraph 5 March 2016