



“LIFE GOES ON...” – ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE & PERCEPTION REGARDING ORGAN DONATION AMONG HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL IN TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL AT AHMEDABAD, GUJARAT.

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ABSTRACT One brain dead donor can save up to 9 lives of people languishing due to end stage organ failure. In India, the depressing statistics convey the urgent need for more people to step up and donate their organs. So, to start from the people who are dealing with life and death by being in the closest proximity possible, this study analyzes knowledge & perception regarding organ donation among the medical fraternity. A cross-sectional study was conducted at Civil Hospital, Asarwa, Ahmedabad. Among 155 participants, majority were willing to donate organs, though family's agreement upon the same was unclear among half of them. Major reasons behind the refusal were lack of faith in Health care system & religious beliefs. Surprisingly, more than 80 % of participants had very poor knowledge regarding the practical aspects of organ donation e.g. NOTTO Online register, Organ donation card, Helpline number and whom to contact in case of brain death; a huge reason to worry for its future. Thus, its high time to implement better strategies and improve awareness, aggressively so we can replicate the same for general population as well.

KEYWORDS : Brain death, Healthcare professionals, Organ donation.

BACKGROUND

“When I think back on my life just four years ago, the circumstances were dire. I wasn't sure if I would still be alive in six months – But now, I have become a mother, all because someone said yes to being an organ donor.”- Amanda Washek, who got a life saving liver transplant on 11th August, 2017 at US.^[1]

The concept of organ transplantation in India starts with Lord Ganesha. He is an example of first tissue graft performed by Lord Shiva using elephant's head. In 600 BC, Sushruta - Father of Indian Surgery, used skin graft for rhinoplasty and made a record in surgical transplant history which was followed by many other surgeons across the world. As usual, we initiated but we didn't follow. India's Organ Donation (OD) rate is one of the lowest in the world. Spain has 47 per million, USA has 32 per million and India has only 0.86 per million OD rate per year.^[2] 0.009 % of all those who died in India donated their organs.^[2] India needs 2 lakh Kidneys , 50,000 Hearts and Livers each per year. Vs Organs available per year : kidney 1684 , hearts 339, livers 708. (less than 1 %). 4 lakh people die every year in India, waiting for organs.^[2]

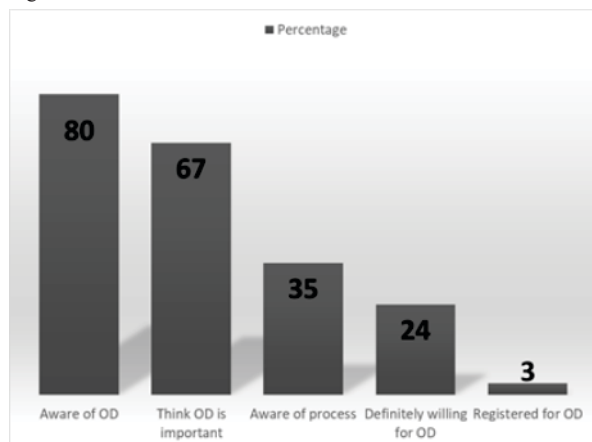


Figure – 1 : Landscape Of OD In India^[3]

This has been the story so far for India.

- Aware of OD : 80 %
- Think OD is important : 67 %
- Aware of process for registration : 35 %
- Definitely willing for OD : 24 %
- Finally Registered For OD Only 3 %.

Objective of this study, was to assess the knowledge and willingness regarding Organ donation among Health care personnel and spread awareness about mainly the practical aspect of Organ donation.

METHOD AND MATERIALS

- **Study Design:** Descriptive Cross-sectional study
- **Study Site:** B. J. Medical college & Civil hospital, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
- **Study Period :** January & February 2023.
- **Study Population :** Doctors, Residents, Interns and Nursing staff.
- **Sample Size :** 155.
- **Sampling Technique :** Purposive sampling
- **Data Collection :** Google form based, self-designed questionnaire along with Informed consent.
- The First part included demographic information such as Gender, Age group & Occupation.
- The Second part comprised of 17 questions to assess their knowledge & willingness regarding Organ donation.
- **Data Analysis :** Microsoft excel.

Table 1 : The Questionnaire^[4]

SELF DESIGNED QUESTIONNAIRE (MULTIPLE CHOICE CLOSED ENDED QUESTIONS)	
1.	What is organ donation ?
2.	What is minimum and maximum age limit to enrol for organ donation ?
3.	After brain-dead, which organs shall be donated ?
4.	Which organ cannot be donated by living organ ?
5.	Is it mandatory to take family consent to retrieve organs from a brain dead ?
6.	Can family member object & stop the organ retrieval from a pledged organ donor ?
7.	Do you know the helpline number & institute nearby to visit for organ donation for brain dead ?
8.	Do you know about “NOTTO” organ donation online register ?
9.	Would you be comfortable to carry Organ donation card ?
10.	Do you feel that AADHAR card/Driving licence should be linked with OD card ?
11.	Who should bear the cost of brain-dead person until setup gets ready for transplant ?
12.	Do your family agree with Organ donation ?
13.	Do you agree to donate your organs after death ?
14.	If no, what is the reason behind your refusal ?
15.	If you have marked “Lack of faith in health-care system” in above question, kindly choose : Government facility, Private facility or both.
16.	What is your understanding regarding Organ donation ?
17.	Your views, opinion or feedback (Open ended Question)

RESULTS

Table 2 – Socio-demographic Details Of The Participants

FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
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GENDER		
MALE	107	69
FEMALE	48	31
AGE		
18 - 25 year	126	81.3
26 - 65 year	29	18.7
OCCUPATION		
Interns	76	49.03
Residents	50	32.26
Faculty	5	3.22
Nursing staff	24	15.49

- In context of willingness, Majority of the participants (86 %) were willing to donate organs. 39% of the total participants were not sure about their family's stand & 10 % said that their family won't agree. Reasons among those who refused to donate organs were : Religious belief & spirituality (36.36 %), Lack of awareness & communication (24.24 %), Lack of faith in health care system (15.15 %), Lack of organizational support (9.1 %), Secrecy leads to the possibility of illegal or personal monetary beneficial transplant (9.1 %), Chances of organ wastage (6.06 %).
- In context of knowledge, around 2/3rd of participants was not knowing that there is NO AGE LIMITS for OD and signing up. 4 out of 5 participants were not aware about whom to contact for organ donation of a brain dead. Also 3 out 4 participants were not at all aware about "NOTTO" website, process and online register for organ donation. 70 % of participants were unclear about decision making in case of objection raised by family member of a pledged organ donor.
- Around 80 % of participants feel comfortable to carry organ donor card (83.2 %) and think that it should be linked with AADHAR/DL (78.1 %). More than 60% of participants thought that hospital & recipient's family should bear the cost of brain-dead person until the transplant happens and government should provide incentives to donor's family. 3 out of 4 participants wanted to donate the organs to save someone's life and only 16.8 % thought it as a responsibility.

DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

- There are broadly 2 types of donors: Living donors and Deceased donors. Organs that can be donated by living donor are partial lung, partial intestine, one kidney, partial liver and partial pancreas. Organs & tissues that can be donated by deceased are Heart, Liver, Kidney, Intestine, Lungs, Cornea, Pancreas, Bones, Tendons, Ligaments and veins. One deceased donor can save up to 9 lives by organ donation (2 Kidneys, 2 Lungs, Liver can be split into 2, Heart, Intestine, Pancreas) and up to 50 lives by donating tissues.
- In India, lakhs of people need organs and ultimately they die just being in a waiting list. Our statistics are horribly depressing. Also it adds more pain as it is definitely preventable. We need many more awareness programmes & promotional activities at both levels : for health care professionals & for general public. There is no age limit for signing up ourselves for Organ donation. People need to take it as a responsibility. Also family awareness regarding the same is cornerstone for better outcomes.
- GOVERNMENT has to promote organ donation aggressively. If health care personnel are unaware about the practical details then general population will be definitely far behind than them. Government may introduce INCENTIVES for donor's family. That may significantly increase the registration. Also those who have registered themselves for organ donation and carrying the OD card along with them may get certain minor benefits and privileges so people can get encouragement from them. Also we need strict LEGISLATION for prohibiting the unethical practices regarding the organ donation.

Some Important facts to know regarding OD :

- Official website: www.notto.gov.in
- 24 x 7 Toll free helpline number : 1800-114-770
- There is NO AGE LIMITS for organ donation or signing up.
- Brain dead and Coma are 2 different things on the basis of brain activity. According to The Human Organs Act 1994, panel of 4 doctors (RMP of Govt, RMP of in charge hospital, treating physician, Neuro) will test twice at 6 hours interval before declaration.^[5]
- Even if you decide to pledge your organs, if your family says no at that time, then it's a NO.
- After declaration of brain death, if you agree to donate organs, the hospital bears all expenses of artificially supporting the donor.

- Organ donation does not mutilate the body. Single surgical incision from the chest to the navel. Body is then returned to family for cremation.
- All major religious faiths support organ donation as a humanitarian act.
- Process to register yourself : Visit NOTTO website and create an ID > Fill out the digital form and submit > On acceptance, you'll receive an email notice > Create your donor card.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that majority of the participants were willing to donate organs, but only half of the total participants were sure about their family's agreement. Major factors behind refusals were religious beliefs, lack of awareness & lack of faith in health care system. Knowledge regarding the practical aspects of OD is very poor even among health care personnel, a considerable reason to worry. We need more awareness & promotional activities. Government has to promote aggressively along with introduction of incentives for donor's family. If people will take it as a responsibility, then only we can see an exponential rise in organ donation.

Limitations Of The Study

Though selected samples were highly related to the research topic, purposive sampling can not be always generalized. Also, google form based data collection may produce frivolous responses.

Consent: Informed consent was taken from each participant before the survey.

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Author's Contribution

DBT, Conception and design, Data collection, Analysis and Interpretation of the data, Drafting of the article and guarantor of the article.

HKM, Final approval of article.

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