



Knowledge, Attitude, Perception Among Students, Teachers And Lay People Regarding Human Dignity And Assessment Of Barriers To Whole Body Donation-A Cross Sectional Study.

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION - Anatomy is the study of structure of human body and forms the basic subject studied by undergraduate and postgraduate students. Only source for the cadavers in the medical institutions will be unclaimed bodies and few donated bodies. Thus it is imperative that our medical fraternity and health care professionals has to support and give awareness regarding voluntary body donation.

OBJECTIVES

1.To determine the knowledge, attitude and perception of medical students (2nd year), teachers in medical college and laypersons of Dakshina Kannada and neighboring districts, regarding human dignity in order to determine their view about voluntary body donation.

2. To assess the barriers to whole body donation.

METHODOLOGY-

This cross sectional study, was conducted on consented students, teachers and in lay men by a structured questionnaire to assess the knowledge, attitude and perception towards dignity and voluntary body donation. The obtained data was analyzed through descriptive statistics.

RESULTS –

The data analysis shows that the teachers are having significant knowledge regarding human dignity when compared with laypersons and students. There is no significant difference in the mean attitude regarding human dignity in teachers VS students when compared with laypersons. The perception regarding human dignity is more in lay persons when compared with teachers and students.

CONCLUSION -

This study insist to conduct more organized efforts like body donation camp to raise the awareness about willed body donation. The donors and their families have to be given social honour, recognition and appropriate incentives like health care facilities

KEYWORDS

Dignity, Dissection, Cadaver.

Introduction

Anatomy is the study of structure of human body and forms the basic subject studied by undergraduate and postgraduate students. Dissection of human cadavers forms an integral part of anatomy learning and research. The visual tactile experience gained during systemic dissection is an incomparable aid to understand anatomy (1). Only source for the cadavers in the medical institutions will be unclaimed bodies and few donated bodies. As the number of medical colleges increases in the present scenario, most of the medical schools experience difficulties in obtaining adequate number of cadavers. At present, unclaimed bodies are the main source of cadavers that is coming from the authorized government institutions. So the body donation program should be encouraged by the medical schools and regular campaigns must be held to create awareness among the public regarding Body donation. Willed body donation is an act of conferring one, s body for medical college for teaching anatomy and research. This program is still uncommon in India (2). The success of this program depends upon the ability of our health care professionals in motivating the society for the same. One of the barrier for this program is mainly depends on the knowledge and attitude of people towards voluntary body donation and their concept regarding human dignity (3). Human dignity features in many professional practice codes and the consideration of human dignity is an essential part of medical profession. Hence, there should be a clear understanding of different ideas regarding dignity, however, many factors affect the interpretation of dignity, including personal experience and cultural understanding(4).

Thus it is imperative that our medical fraternity and health care professionals has to support and give awareness regarding this issue.

Research questions

Whether the knowledge, attitude and perception regarding human dignity vary from 2nd year medical students, teachers in a medical college and laypersons of Dakshina Kannada district and neighboring districts?

What are the challenges and barriers that can be overcome to get more people to volunteer for whole body donation?

Objectives:

1.To determine the knowledge, attitude and perception of medical students (2nd year), teachers in medical college and laypersons of Dakshina Kannada and neighboring districts, regarding human dignity in order to determine their view about voluntary body donation.

2. To assess the barriers to whole body donation.

Materials & Methods

Ethical clearance: The study was conducted after due approval from the ethical committee of Yenepoya University.

A cross sectional study was conducted on 60 consented participants. It was ensured that participation in the questionnaire based study is voluntary and identities of the participants are kept strictly confidential. A semi structured questionnaire was used to assess the knowledge, attitude and perception to-

wards human dignity and voluntary body donation. The participants were divided into three groups-

1. Teachers
2. MBBS students(2nd year)
3. Lay persons

Study Design – Questionnaire based; administered through paper and pen mode.

Inclusion criteria for the study

1. Teachers in Medical colleges
2. MBBS students(2nd year)
3. Lay persons

Exclusion criteria for the study

First year MBBS students.

Statistical analysis -The obtained data is analyzed through descriptive statistics. P value is considered as <0.05

Results

The total number of participants in this study was 60. Each group comprises 20.The analysis has done on the knowledge, attitude and perception on human dignity and voluntary body donation.

Table.1.showing the Mean knowledge, Attitude and Perception regarding human dignity.

Parameters	Mean Knowledge	Mean Attitude	Mean Perception
Teachers	4.25±0.63	3.85±0.93	3.68±1.03
Lay persons	3.67±0.76	3.72±0.71	3.75±0.46
Students	3.77±1.04	3.85±0.90	3.00±0.96

After analyzing the data by descriptive statistics this study found that the knowledge regarding human dignity was higher in teachers when compared with lay person and students. The attitude towards dignity was same in teachers and in students (table1).But the perception regarding human dignity was more in lay persons when compared with teachers and students (table1). ANOVA used to compare the knowledge, attitude and perception regarding human dignity within the groups and between the groups. And the results shows that there is no significant different in knowledge, within groups and between groups. But the attitude and perception regarding human dignity was more in lay persons. When the data analyzed by Pearson co relation this study found that there is no significant increase in attitude or perception in relation with knowledge in teachers and in students. But in lay persons there is significant increase in attitude and perception in relation with their knowledge.

Table.2 showing the Mean knowledge, Attitude and Perception regarding voluntary body donation.

Parameters	Mean Knowledge	Mean Attitude	Mean Perception
Teachers	3.41±0.71	3.12±1.08	3.42±0.84
Lay persons	3.05±0.83	3.90±.85	4.12±0.48
Students	3.18±0.76	3.42±0.84	3.12±0.84

This study found that the knowledge regarding voluntary body donation is more in teachers.95% confidence interval does not vary from 3.06 to 3.73.The knowledge, Attitude and Perception regarding voluntary body donation has been compared between groups and within groups by ANOVA. And the results shows that there is no significant different in knowledge, within groups and between groups. The teachers are having the knowledge regarding body donation but their attitude and perception regarding the same is significantly decreased when compared with other two groups (Table 2). The students are also having knowledge regarding body donation but their attitude and perception regarding the same is decreased (table 2). Lay person does not have much knowledge regarding body donation but their attitude and perception regarding voluntary body donation is significantly increased (table 2).

Discussion -

The present study aimed to determine the knowledge, atti-

tude and perception regarding human dignity in order to determine their view about voluntary body donation. The data analysis shows that the teachers are having significant knowledge regarding human dignity when compared with laypersons and students (table1). The knowledge regarding human dignity is more in students when compared with laypersons. These findings could be because of the difference in the study .There is no significant difference in the mean attitude regarding human dignity in teachers VS students when compared with laypersons (table1). This could be because of their experience in hospital atmosphere. The perception regarding human dignity is more in lay persons when compared with teachers and students (table1), because of their lack of knowledge regarding human dignity and organ donation and they are handling the things in an emotional back ground. This study shows a slightly lower prevalence of adequate knowledge regarding human dignity in laypersons when compared to earlier studies (5). In the present study 70% lay persons are ready to donate their organs because they want to help others.

Anatomy is the study of structure of human body and forms the basic subject studied by undergraduate and postgraduate students. Dissection of human cadavers forms an integral part of anatomy learning and research. Only source for the cadavers in the medical institutions will be unclaimed bodies and few donated bodies. As the number of medical colleges increases in the present scenario, most of the medical schools experience difficulties in obtaining adequate number of cadavers. This paucity is negatively affecting anatomy teaching programs. Thus willed body donation is the need of the hour (6).

This study also aimed to determine the barriers to whole body donation. This section also carried out by a questionnaire method. The knowledge regarding voluntary body donation in teachers are more when compared to students and lay persons (table2).There is no significant difference in attitude towards body donation in teachers VS students (table2).But the attitude and perception towards body donation are significantly increased in lay persons when compared to other two groups (table2).The present study shows that the teachers in medical colleges and 2nd year MBBS students agree the importance of cadaveric dissection in a medical college, these two group's attitude and perception regarding body donation is poor. The study high lights the foremost reason of refusal to voluntary body donation is the anxiety of disrespectful behavior observed towards cadavers. And many of the teachers (during their student life) and students agreed that they have witnessed improper attitude towards cadavers by themselves and their peers at some point of time during dissection. Majority of the respondents agree that religion supports body donation. None of the religions object to organ donation or body donation in principle although in some, there is varying thought (7). Psychological barrier is an aspect which needs to be addressed. Majority of the teachers and students are reluctant to donate their body .But at the same time the lay persons are showing positive attitude and are having good perception regarding body donation. This could be because majority of this group does not have an experience with dissection. In a similar study conducted to assess the attitudes of Turkish anatomists toward body donation majority of the respondents objected to donating their bodies due to psychological reasons (8).Still greater concerns lies in the fact that teachers in medical colleges and MBBS students are even more reluctant to donate their body or approve body donation by a family member because of their unpleasant experience in the dissection classes. In this study there is no significant difference in the knowledge, attitude and perception regarding human dignity and body donation among males and females.

The voluntary body donation has to be accepted by the society and considered as a noble act like blood donation. There is a great need to create public awareness regarding body donation and organ donation, beginning with the health care professionals who can motive the same. Health care workers especially doctors have to take an initiation and establish a relationship of trust among patients and their relatives. The

opinions and belief are the governing factors in shaping public opinion and attitude towards donation.

This study recommends to reinforce the necessity of giving education regarding the importance of organ donation and body donation. This basic education or training for teachers / doctors has to be started from first year of the course immediately after the commencement of the course. The first year students of medical professions need to be trained regarding the handling of the cadavers in a dissection hall. The anatomy teachers in first year has the responsibility to train their students to believe that the cadavers are their first patients and dissection on cadavers is a land mark, to recognize emotional issues that students may confront and to guide them toward becoming humane physicians. This study also found that education about organ donation or voluntary body donation is lacking in medical curriculum at undergraduate and post graduate levels.

This study found that the main barrier for voluntary body donation is the disrespectful behavior they see during cadaveric dissection and mishandling of dissected parts of a cadaver. In order to agree with the religious support about body donation many people wished to attain salvation by a proper funeral.

Conclusion- Though the healthcare professionals and medical students had the knowledge regarding human dignity and voluntary body donation, their attitude and perception towards the same was poor when compared to lay persons. Their knowledge need to reflect to their attitude and perception. Health care workers especially doctors have to take an initiation and establish a relationship of trust among patients and their relatives. Due assurance should be given to prospective donors that their bodies will be treated with respect and dignity. The awareness regarding the respectful treatment to the cadavers to be given to the students and the feelings of the donors and their family members behind body donation should be stressed on each student's mind. The practice of honoring the cadavers at commencement of dissection, by teachers and students should be entertained. There should be a provision for a donor to take a decision on the disposal of their body parts after the purpose. The present study recommend to introduce the details of Anatomy Act in medical curriculum at undergraduate level and post graduate level and conduct more and more awareness programs like body donation camps.

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