

AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE OF MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS TOWARDS WHOLE BODY AND ORGAN DONATION

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Abstract

Organ donation and transplantation allows a deceased or living donor to give life to another. Surgeons remove a healthy organ from a donor and transfer it to someone in need. The organs that can be transplanted include the liver, kidney, heart, lungs etc. In our study we evaluated the awareness and attitude of medical fraternity towards organ and whole body donation to know opinion regarding whole body and organ donation, reasons behind willingness and unwillingness to donate organs and whole body, motivating factors for donation, reasons for not filling up the pledge form if willing to donate among students of medical school

INTRODUCTION

Anatomy deals with the study of human body structures and the best method to deliver anatomy training to undergraduate medical students is by cadaver dissection. Voluntary whole body donation and unclaimed bodies obtained by the police is the principal means by which universities acquire bodies for dissection.

Cadaveric (brain dead person) donor's are those who died from irreversible neurological injury usually from massive trauma to the brain such as aneurysm, stroke or auto mobile accident. Eyes, kidney, liver, lungs, pancreas, heart, intestinal organs etc., can be harvested from a cadaveric (brain dead person) donors.

Now a days, there are millions of needy patients all over the world who suffer from various end stage organ failure's and whose lives can be saved only by the timely placement of the

failed organ. So, it is the time to motivate the minds of people for the purpose of medical education and research and to save one's life.

So, this study was undertaken to examine the awareness and attitude of medical training students and doctors towards both whole body donation to medical science and organ donation for transplantation.

AIM OF THE STUDY

To evaluate the awareness and attitude of medical fraternity towards organ and whole body donation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To know opinion regarding whole body and organ donation, reasons behind willingness and unwillingness to donate organs and whole body, motivating factors for donation, reasons for not filling up the pledge form if willing to donate among students of medical school.

METHODS

A cross sectional study was conducted among 500 medical personnel above age group of 20 years including undergraduates, graduates and postgraduates to know the awareness and attitude of medical training students towards organ and whole body donation in Rama Dental College and Hospital and Research Centre, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh in January 2022. Undergraduates were categorized into third and fourth year students. A multiple choice questionnaire had been given to the participants which includes demographic features, opinion regarding whole body and organ donation, reasons behind willingness and unwillingness to donate organs and whole body and for not filling up the pledge form if willing to donate.

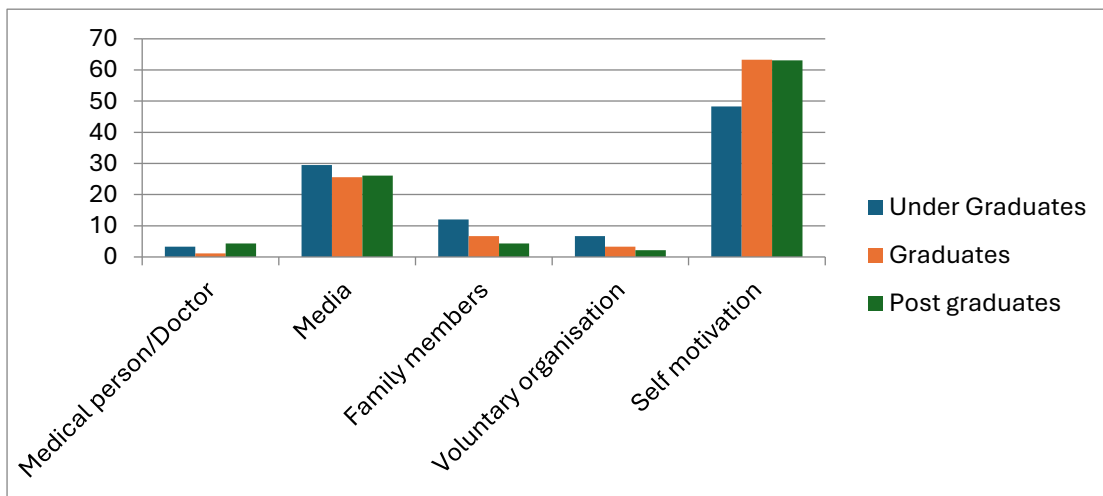
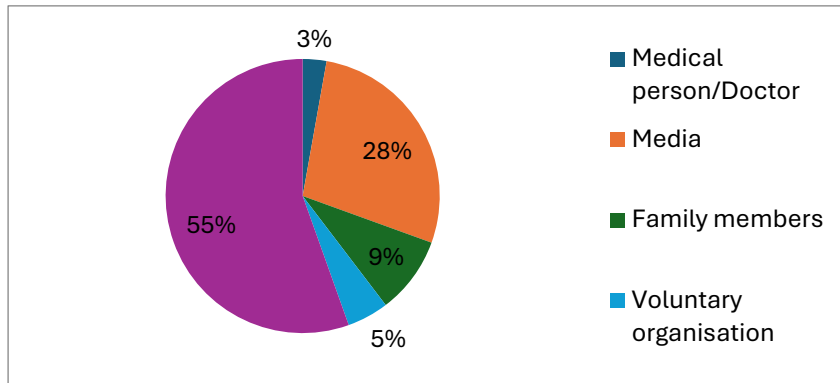
RESULTS

Distribution of demographic parameters:

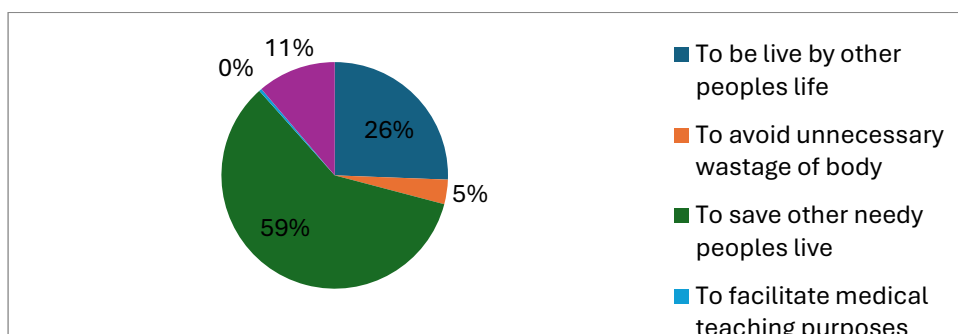
Total 500 medical personnel participated in the study. Females (76.4%) were more common than males (23.6%). Out of 500 participants, 273 (54.6%) were under graduates out of which

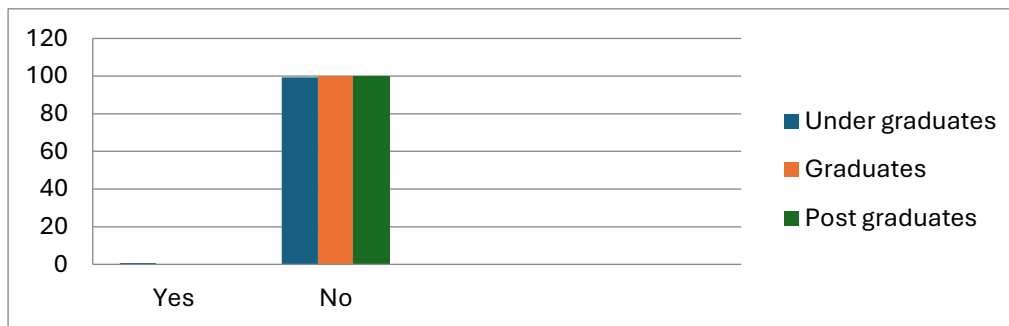
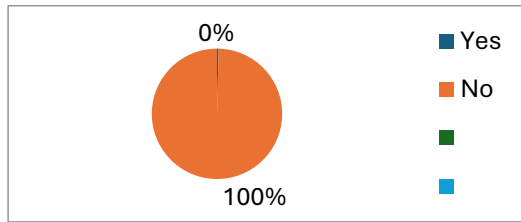
144 (28.8%) were in third year and 129 (25.6%) were in fourth year, 144 (28.8%) were graduates, 83 (16.6%) were post graduate professionals.

Motivating factors for donation:



Reasons for willingness to donate



Number of participants who had filled donor card**DISCUSSION**

Body donation to science was first occurred in 1832, when British utilitarian philosopher, Jurist and social reformer Jeremy Bentham's body donated their body according to their will. In India, it was first experienced in year 1956, when the body of Pandurang Sridhar Apte was donated to BJ Medical college, Pune¹. Even though, body donation was started in 1956 there was no significant improvement in percentage of body donation.

As physicians will have maximum knowledge on organ donation process, they can play a key role in solving this problem of shortage of organs and body by eliminating the barriers for organ and body donation by creating awareness, educating and motivating others but they may fail because of lack of knowledge about donation³. So, this study is undertaken, to know the awareness and attitude among 500 medical personnel which includes undergraduates, graduates and post graduates.

In this study, we found that 44% of respondents were willing to donate organs, 47.8% were willing to donate body only for organ transplantation while for dissection purpose was very poor and females were more willing to donate than males. Very negligible members were willing to donate for money. In a study done among medical students in Turkey, 58.4% were willing to donate their organs and the acceptance of live organ donation was higher than cadaveric donation³. So, it is suggested that more knowledge about body donation for

dissection purpose is needed to maximize the donation rates among the medical students and it will be helpful for the education and research purposes of medical students⁵.

Various motivating factors for donation includes media, family members, medical person / doctor, voluntary organization and self motivation. This study reveals that majority of students were self motivated followed by media and only 8 members were motivated by medical person / doctor and 59.3% of students said that they want to save other needy people's live. In other studies they found that print / electronic media as their major and primary source of knowledge⁶.

Although, more than half of our students were willing to donate, only one student has filled up donor card and only 8 of them asked for donor card which were similar to a study done in turkey, where only 1.2% had a organ donor card⁷.

Although they are willing to donate, many students did not fill the donor card and 34% of participants said that they will do later and 33% of participants had no idea about procedure. It states that the participants who are willing to donate are not whole heartedly willing to donate and some participants did not know about the procedure. so, proper guidance and counseling of and also incorporating organ donation topics in medical curriculum thereby creating awareness about it is very much essential⁸.

In this study, reasons behind unwillingness to donate organ or body was not wanting cut their body into pieces followed by mistrust or misconception, fear of premature organ removal, religious barriers and monetary benefit very less percentage of people were prevented by their family members.

Based on this study it is clear that most of the medical students were not willing to donate body for dissection as they don't want their body to be cutting into pieces by their previous experience with dissection hall. A study shown that idea of donating bodies to medical science decreases significantly from 31.5% to 19.6% but not levels reported in general population⁹.

So, in India, Anatomy act was implemented in 1949 which is a state act published in state government gazette, which regulates the use of unclaimed bodies for medical research and education. It states that any death occurring in the state hospital or in a public place

within the prescribed zone of medical institution and there are no claimants for body provided the police declared a lapse of 48hours, they can be used for medical education¹⁰.

Awareness of brain death and its importance for organ transplantation was extremely low in India especially among villagers⁴. Brain stem death was now legal in India under the passage of legislation by the Indian parliament act 1994 and it applies only when organ transplantation was intended⁸.

Most important reason for no body donation in Indians is lack of awareness followed by religious beliefs ⁽¹⁰⁾. In a study done in Libya, lack of adequate knowledge and religious implications were the major reasons for refusal ⁽⁵⁾.

So, shortage of organs was not only due to mistrust or misconception but also because of lack of awareness, thought of being dissected and religious implications.

CONCLUSION

In spite of having awareness about organ and whole body donation, most of the medical students did not filled the pledge form because of mistrust or misconception about the organ or whole body would be treated, fear of premature organ removal, having no knowledge about donation procedure, religious barriers, not wanting their body to be cutting into pieces and some are prevented by family members.

It is emphasized that there is a need for reviewing medical school curricula and focusing on organ and whole body donation so, that there will be an altruistic change in attitude of future medical professionals towards organ and whole body donation.

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