

Editorial review:
India and organ donation

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Abstract:

Organ donation is defined as donation of biological tissue or an organ of the human body, from a living or dead person within specified time limit , to a living recipient in need of a transplantation. Indian government in 1994 introduced law "The Transplantation of Human Organs Act" really brought significant changes in the organ donation and transplantation scene in India. Corneal donation programme is having good success. Despite such law there have been stray instances of organ trade in India. Tamil Nadu is the leader in deceased organ donation in the country. This is possible due to combined effect of both government and private hospitals, NGOs and the State Health department. Currently more than 100,000 people are waiting for an organ transplant, yet there is a shortage of donors. Over the years people all over the world have stopped registering to be organ donors.

Background:

Organ donation is defined as donation of biological tissue or an organ of the human body, from a living or dead person within specified time limit , to a living recipient in need of a transplantation. Such transplantation procedure from human to human is known as **allografts** . The transfer of animal organs into human bodies is known as **xenotransplantation**.¹ Transplantation is based on the donor's medical and social history . In global scenario, there is seen large gap between the numbers of registered donors compared to those awaiting organ donations.²

Consent process:

The consent process for organ donation is basically of two types viz Explicit consent (opt-in system) and presumed consent (opt-out system).

Explicit consent consists of the donor giving direct consent through proper registration depending on the country. While the **presumed consent**, which does not need direct consent from the donor or the next of kin. Presumed consent assumes that donation would have been permitted by the potential donor if permission was pursued. Of possible donors an estimated twenty five percent of families refuse to donate a loved one's organs.^{3,4}

In global survey study, the countries which use presumed consent having high numbers of transplants compared to who use explicit consent.

India and organ donation:

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programme is having good success. Despite such law there have been stray instances of organ trade in India.

Tamil Nadu Model:

Tamil Nadu is the leader in deceased organ donation in the country. This is possible due to combined effect of

both government and private hospitals, NGOs and the State Health department. In the year 2000 , through the efforts of an NGO , MOHAN Foundation state of Tamil Nadu started an organ sharing network between a few hospitals. In 2008, the Government of Tamil Nadu put together government orders laying down procedures and guidelines for deceased organ donation and transplantation in the state.

There are such different programs and efforts adopted by state ministries in India.

- Andhra Pradesh - Jeevandan programme
- Karnataka - Zonal Coordination Committee of Karnataka for Transplantation
- Kerala - Mrithasanjeevani - The Kerala Network for Organ Sharing
- Maharashtra - Zonal Transplant Coordination Center in Mumbai
- Tamil Nadu – Cadaver Transplant Programme

In the year 2012 besides Tamil Nadu other southern states to do deceased donation transplants more frequently. An online organ sharing registry for deceased donation and transplantation is used by the states of Tamil Nadu (www.tnos.org) and Kerala (www.knos.org.in). Both these registries have been developed, implemented and maintained by MOHAN Foundation.

Organ selling is legally banned in Asia. Numerous studies have documented that organ vendors have a poor *quality of life* (QOL) following kidney donation.

However a study done by Vemuru reddy *et al* shows a significant improvement in Quality of life contrary to the earlier belief. Live related renal donors have a significant improvement in the QOL following renal donation using the WHO QOL BREF in a study done at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences from 2006 to 2008. The quality of life of the donor was poor when the graft was lost or the recipient died.^{5,6}

Religious views and organ donation

All major religions accept organ donation in at least some form on either utilitarian grounds (*i.e.*, because of its life-saving capabilities) or deontological grounds (*e.g.*, the right of an individual believer to make his or her own decision). Most religions, among them the Roman Catholic Church, support organ donation on the grounds that it constitutes an act of charity and provides a means of saving a life, consequently Pope Francis is an organ donor. One religious group, The Jesus Christians, became known as "The Kidney Cult" because more than half its members had donated their kidneys altruistically. Jesus Christians claim altruistic kidney donation is a great way to "Do unto others what they would want you to do unto them." Some religions placed some restrictions on the types of organs that may be donated and/or on the means by which organs may be harvested and/or transplanted. For example, Jehovah's Witnesses require that organs be drained of any blood due to their interpretation of the Hebrew Bible/Christian Old Testament as prohibiting blood transfusion, and Muslims require that the donor have provided written consent in advance. A few groups disfavor organ transplantation or donation; notably, these include Shinto and those who follow the customs of the Gypsies.^{1, 7}

Judaism considers organ donation obligatory if it will save a life, as long as the donor is considered

dead as defined by Jewish law. In both Judaism the majority view holds that organ donation is permitted in the case of irreversible cardiac rhythm cessation. In some more cases, rabbinic authorities believe that organ donation may be mandatory, whereas a minority opinion considers any donation of a live organ as forbidden.

Shortage of organ donation

Currently more than 100,000 people are waiting for an organ transplant, yet there is a shortage of donors. Over the years people all over the world have stopped registering to be organ donors. Causing many people to die each year. The shortage is causing countries all over the world to go to drastic measures of getting donors. Such as, paying them for the said organs needed. Although, organs may only be taken from donors that have been declared dead (brain-dead). The shortage of organs have increased because of criteria among certain organs. For example, a kidney transplant would be less likely to fail if it was

donated by young, healthy donors other than older donors who have had medical issues in their past. This is causing too much pressure amongst people to donate. More countries have been moving toward making everyone an organ donor unless they have a signed consent disregarding them from donating. People are even selling organs and causing black market sales with insufficient postoperative care to patients. Other than this health and safety issue, the organ shortage can be solved by paying people to donate. This leading to the ethical dispute of people saying "no give, no take." This stating that if they are willing to give then they should be first to receive if needed. Also stating that each person would receive points for every relative who signs a donor card as well as them. Without such techniques to help increase donors then the amount of organs for transplant patients will gradually and drastically decrease over time.^{1, 4,7,8}

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