

Factors affecting willingness for live and deceased organ donation in a Sri Lankan urban community

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Understanding the factors that influence the willingness to donate organs is important to increase the availability of organs for transplantation. This study assessed the willingness of Sri Lankans to donate organs and explored the factors associated with that decision. 144 adults from the Dehiwala Medical Officer of Health area, selected using random area sampling, took part in this community-based cross-sectional study. An interviewer-administered questionnaire, adapted from validated tools and refined with expert input, was used to collect data on sociodemographic factors, knowledge, attitudes, and existing practices concerning live and deceased organ donation. Twenty selected questions were scored independently by experts, and a score of 70% or more was considered ‘good knowledge’. The mean age was 46 years and 47% were male. The highest level of education for most participants was GCE A/L. A majority (52.78%) demonstrated good knowledge. The percentage of participants who expressed willingness to engage in deceased donation (DD) was substantially higher (81.1%) compared with live donation (LD) (30.8%). As high as 94.7% of the respondents with good knowledge expressed willingness for DD compared to 51.5% for LD ($p=0.003$). Willingness for LD showed a positive association ($p<0.05$) with prior awareness of organ donation and family approval. Willingness for LD was not significantly influenced by ethnicity. There was a strong association between Islam and unwillingness to donate after death ($p < 0.001$). Having donated blood or organs previously, having a chronic disease, or having a family member with a chronic disease was not significantly associated with willingness for either LD or DD. “Save someone’s life” was the most common motivation for both LD (97.7%) and DD (94%). “Religious beliefs” (78.9%) was the most common reason for unwillingness for DD. A majority of participants expressed favourable attitudes toward deceased organ donation. The findings highlight the need for culturally sensitive, targeted awareness programmes to enhance organ donation practices in Sri Lanka.

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