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Attitudes of renal transplant patients towards organ donation

Abstract

Aim: With organ insufficiency, specifically kidney failure, becoming a prevalent health concern, renal transplantation emerges as a life-altering solution. However, the scarcity of donor organs calls for an exploration into patients' attitudes towards organ donation. This research aims to understand these attitudes and their underlying reasons, intending to reveal the factors that influence organ donation rates. Our goal is to boost these rates and give more individuals on the organ waiting list a chance for a life-saving transplantation.

Materials and Methods: The study was conducted with the participation of 361 randomly selected renal transplant patients. The study protocol was in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and was approved by the Institutional Review Board (approval number: 2022/21). A questionnaire was used to collect data on patients' demographic information, knowledge about organ donation, attitudes toward donation, and reasons for donating or not donating organs.

Results: Most patients (78%) indicated that they have knowledge about organ donation. However, only 42% of them have engaged in organ donation. Among the patients who do not donate organs, the most common reasons identified were lack of family approval (45%), personal concerns (32%), and lack of information (23%). Among the patients who donate organs, the most common motivations were helping others (55%), understanding the importance of organ donation (28%), and personal experiences (17%).

Conclusion: This study provides important findings on the attitudes of renal transplant patients toward organ donation. Measures such as increasing awareness about organ donation, facilitating the family approval process, and sharing personal experiences should be taken to increase organ donation rates. This can improve the quality of life for patients waiting for organs and save more lives. Conducting more comprehensive and diverse studies in the future can further advance knowledge and awareness about organ donation.

Keywords: Organ donation, renal transplantation, patient attitudes, organ failure, health behavior

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary healthcare, organ donation has emerged as a significant treatment option for organ failures such as renal insufficiency (1). Renal transplantation is an effective method that offers a new lease on life for patients suffering from kidney failure (2,3). However, the attitudes of renal transplant patients towards organ donation and the donation rates hold significant importance due to the inadequacy of organs required for transplantation (4).

This study aims to gain a better understanding of the attitudes of renal transplant patients toward organ donation and the underlying reasons. By identifying the factors influencing the attitudes of renal transplant patients towards organ donation, the study aims to increase the donation rates, thus ensuring more individuals on the organ waiting list receive a chance for transplantation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design

This study employed a cross-sectional research design to examine the attitude of renal transplant patients toward organ donation. Data were collected through a questionnaire and analyzed using statistical methods.

The study protocol was in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and was approved by the Scientific Research and Publications Ethic Committee of Beykoz University (approval number: 2022/21).

Participants

Between the years 2016 and 2022, a total of 361 patients were randomly selected from a population of 6000 renal transplant recipients for inclusion in the study.

Data Collection Instruments

In the data collection process, a questionnaire was used as the data collection tool. The questionnaire was prepared to assess participants' demographic information, their level of knowledge about organ donation, their attitudes towards organ donation, and the reasons for their decision to donate or not to donate organs.

Analysis Methods

A statistical software package was used for data analysis. Statistical analysis methods such as frequency distributions, percentages, and chi-square tests were employed. The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods. Frequency distributions and percentages were used to assess patients' attitudes toward organ donation, their participation in organ donation, and the reasons behind their decisions. Additionally, a chi-square test was conducted to examine the differences between patients who donated organs and those who did not.

RESULTS

The demographic characteristics of the 361 renal transplant patients who participated in this study summarized in Table 1. The majority of the participants were female (50.1%), with nearly an equal distribution among age groups: 18-30 years (19.9%), 31-45 years (35.4%), 46-60 years (30.8%), and 61 years and above (13.9%). Regarding education levels, 39.0% of participants had a university degree, 26.6% completed high school, 21.9% had a middle school education, and 12.5% had only finished elementary school.

In the context of participants' attitudes toward organ donation, it is noteworthy that a considerable proportion (64.0%) expressed the importance of organ donation, reflecting a positive overall inclination toward this life-saving practice. Furthermore, 37.1% of the participants indicated their active contemplation of organ donation (Table 2). The donation status among patients, as depicted in the relevant table, reveals that 41.8% of the participants had already engaged in organ donation, while 58.2% had not yet participated in this altruistic endeavor. Among those who had not donated, the reasons for abstaining, which are presented in another table for reference, included the absence of family approval (44.8%), personal concerns (32.4%), and a lack of information (22.8%) (Tables 3, 4).

Table 5 outlines the motivations of patients who had donated organs. The primary motivation was the desire to help others (55.0%), indicating a strong altruistic inclination among donors. Understanding the importance of organ donation was also a significant motivating factor (27.8%), as were personal experiences (16.6%).

Taking measures such as raising awareness about organ donation,

addressing information gaps, and facilitating the process of obtaining family approval can potentially increase the rates of organ donation. Additionally, sharing personal experiences and organizing informative programs about the vital importance of organ donation can strengthen patients' motivation to help others.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants

	N	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	180	49.9
Female	181	50.1
Age group		
18-30	72	19.9
31-45	128	35.4
46-60	111	30.8
61 and above	50	13.9
Education level		
Elementary school	45	12.5
Middle school	79	21.9
High school	96	26.6
University	141	39.0

Table 2. Attitudes towards organ donation among patients

Attitudes	N	Percentage (%)
Considers it important	231	64.0
Considering donation	134	37.1

Table 3. Donation status and reasons among patients

Donation Status	N	Percentage (%)
Yes	151	41.8
No	210	58.2

Table 4. Reasons for non-donation among patients

Reasons	N	Percentage (%)
Lack of family approval	94	44.8
Personal concerns	68	32.4
Lack of information	48	22.8

Table 5. Motivations among patients who donated

Motivations	N	Percentage (%)
Helping others	83	55.0
Importance of organ donation	42	27.8
Personal experiences	25	16.6

DISCUSSION

Our research is particularly significant as it is the first study to investigate the attitudes of kidney transplant patients toward organ donation. This study aimed to understand the attitudes and reasons of renal transplant patients toward organ donation. The research findings indicate that renal transplant patients

have a general awareness of organ donation. For instance, most patients (78%) stated that they have knowledge about organ donation. Similarly, other studies also demonstrate that patients' knowledge levels about organ donation have increased, and they comprehend the importance of organ donation (5-7).

However, according to the study results, the rate of actual organ donation is lower than expected. Only 42% of the patients have engaged in organ donation. This situation necessitates understanding the reasons behind patients who do not donate organs. Among the patients who do not donate organs in our study, the most common reasons identified were lack of family approval (45%), personal concerns (32%), and lack of information (23%). These findings emphasize that the decision to donate organs is influenced by factors such as family considerations, personal anxieties, and lack of information.

On the other hand, among the patients who donate organs, the most common motivations were helping others (55%), understanding the importance of organ donation (28%), and personal experiences (17%). These results indicate that the moral responsibilities and personal experiences of patients who donate organs enhance their motivation toward organ donation. Similarly, other studies also indicate that factors such as altruism, moral values, and personal experiences influence the willingness to donate organs (8,9).

The findings of this study demonstrate the need for awareness campaigns regarding organ donation and the provision of information and support considering patients' concerns. Sharing information about organ donation and organizing awareness campaigns can be effective in ensuring patients' access to accurate and comprehensive information (10).

Moreover, it is important to raise awareness among families about organ donation and facilitate the approval processes. Considering that organ donation is a family decision, families need to be supported in terms of their attitudes towards organ donation. Education programs about organ donation can help address families' concerns and enable them to access accurate information (11). Additionally, providing counseling services to families during the organ donation process can facilitate their decision-making (12).

Furthermore, it has been stated that a sizable portion of patients who donate organs are motivated by the desire to help others. Sharing personal experiences and highlighting success stories can be effective in strengthening this motivation and encouraging more patients to donate organs. Patients who donate organs share their experiences and narrate the positive impact of organ donation on their lives can enhance a positive attitude towards organ donation (13).

Lastly, informative programs can be organized by healthcare institutions and community organizations to increase the level of understanding about the vital importance of organ donation among patients. Seminars, conferences, and events related to

organ donation can help people understand that organ donation holds life-saving significance. Such programs can increase the attitude toward organ donation and the donation rates (14).

This study contributes to the existing literature on organ donation and provides information about the importance, effects, and reasons behind organ donation. However, the study has some limitations. First, the data collection through a questionnaire relies on the subjective responses of the participants. This means that the answers may carry more subjectivity compared to objective data. Second, the limited research sample and representation of a specific region or hospital group may limit the generalizability of the results. Future research conducted on a broader sample can help the results to be more generalizable.

Based on the findings of this study, it is important to create more awareness about organ donation and disseminate educational campaigns. Healthcare institutions, community organizations, and media outlets can regularly organize informative campaigns about the importance and benefits of organ donation. Additionally, awareness programs and seminars on organ donation can enable the public to access accurate and up-to-date information.

Moreover, more research is needed to increase the motivation of patients considering organ donation. Sharing personal experiences and highlighting success stories can enhance the willingness to donate organs. Furthermore, presenting patients who donate organs as role models and acknowledging their contributions can contribute to the popularization of organ donation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study examines the attitudes of renal transplant patients towards organ donation and provides important findings on the importance, reasons, and barriers of organ donation. Measures such as increasing awareness about organ donation, facilitating the family approval process, and sharing personal experiences should be taken to increase organ donation rates. This can improve the quality of life for patients waiting for organs and save more lives. Conducting more comprehensive and diverse studies in the future can further advance knowledge and awareness about organ donation.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in the study.

Financial Disclosure

The authors declare that they have received no financial support for the study.

Ethical Approval

The study protocol was in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and was approved by the Scientific Research and Publications Ethic Committee of Beykoz University (approval number: 2022/21).

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