Attitudes toward organ donation in Arab-based population: lack of will or knowledge?

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Background: Willingness toward organ donation may vary among younger and older adults. We aimed to assess and characterize awareness and attitudes about organ donation stratified by individuals age.

Methods: We conducted a cross-sectional random telephone survey with a representative sample of adults from all 13 regions in Saudi Arabia from February 12, 2021 and to March 14, 2021. The sample was stratified by individuals age (younger 18 to 35 years old and older ≥ 36 years old).

Results: A total of 3,120 respondents completed the survey (response rate 74%). We found that 57% of younger and 49% of older adults expressed support for organ transplantation, while 54% of the younger and 39% of older adults wanted to donate their organs. However, 3.6% of study participants had registered in the national donor database. Almost half (46% younger and 49% older) agreed with the primary view that it is very important for the donor and the family to agree on positions of organ donation. Physician or other healthcare worker was selected most frequently (59% younger and 57% older) as the information source most likely to influence attitudes toward organ donation and 49% wanted to learn more about organ donation.

Conclusions: While many younger and older adults support organ donation, there is a lack of knowledge about the organ donation system. Efforts are needed for adaptation and implementation of interventions to increase knowledge and support organ donation among younger and older adults.

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