



Original Article

Awareness and Acceptance of Brain Death and Deceased Organ Donation Among General Surgery OPD Patient in Tertiary Care Centre - Cross Sectional Study

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Organ transplantation is a successful medical intervention for end-stage organ failure. In India, there is a massive gap between the demand and availability of organs. Need: ~260,000 organs annually vs a deceased donation rate of <1 per million population (Sachdeva et al., 2017). Brain death – the irreversible cessation of all brain functions – is a critical concept, as it allows for deceased organ donation. Public awareness, knowledge, and attitudes are major determinants of organ donation rates. The General Surgery OPD serves as a vital point of contact with a diverse cross-section of the population, making it an ideal setting to assess these crucial factors

Aim: To evaluate the awareness and acceptance of brain death and deceased organ donation among patients attending the General Surgery OPD.

Objectives

- To assess awareness and understanding of the concept of brain death.
- To evaluate knowledge and acceptance of deceased organ donation.
- To ascertain awareness of the legal framework governing organ donation in India.
- To identify demographic factors influencing awareness and willingness to donate.
- To determine the primary barriers and motivators for organ donation.

Conclusion: There exists a moderate level of awareness regarding organ donation and brain death among the study population.

Keywords: Brain Death, Deceased Organ, Organ donation, Awareness

INTRODUCTION

Organ transplantation is a successful medical intervention for end-stage organ failure.

In India, there is a massive gap between the demand and availability of organs.

Need: ~260,000 organs annually vs a deceased donation rate of <1 per million population (Sachdeva et al., 2017).

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MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Study Design: Prospective, Cross-Sectional Study.

Study Setting: General Surgery OPD of a Tertiary Care Centre.

Study Period: January 2025 – June 2025.

Sample Size: 1000 participants.

Inclusion Criteria:

1. Patients aged 18 years and above.
2. Attending the General Surgery Outpatient Department (OPD).
3. Who are mentally competent and able to communicate effectively.
4. Willing to provide informed, written consent to participate in the study.

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Patients with known cognitive impairment, psychiatric illness, or altered sensorium that would impede their ability to comprehend or respond to the questionnaire.
2. Patients in acute physiological or psychological distress.
3. Declined consent.

DATA COLLECTION:

A validated, structured questionnaire was used consisting of demographic information, awareness, knowledge, attitudes, practices, and barriers related to brain death and organ donation.

Data were collected via face-to-face interviews.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION:

Institutional ethical clearance and participant informed consent were ensured. Confidentiality was maintained throughout.

DATA ANALYSIS:

- Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied using SPSS. Frequencies, percentages, means, and chi-square tests were used, with significance at $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

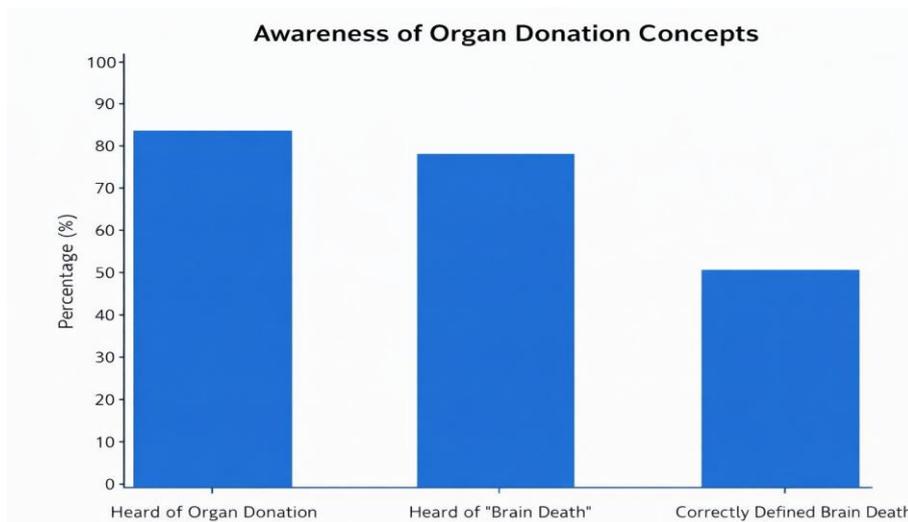
Demographic Profile of Participants (n=1000)

Demographic Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	61%
	Female	39%
Mean Age	41.8 ± 13.2 years	
Education Level	Up to Secondary	31%
	Above Secondary	69%
Residence	Urban	56%
	Rural	44%

Awareness of Organ Donation & Brain Death:**Awareness of Organ Donation Concepts:**

- Heard of Organ Donation: **84.5%**
- Heard of Brain Death: **79%**

- Correctly Defined Brain Death
- (Irreversible): **47.3%**

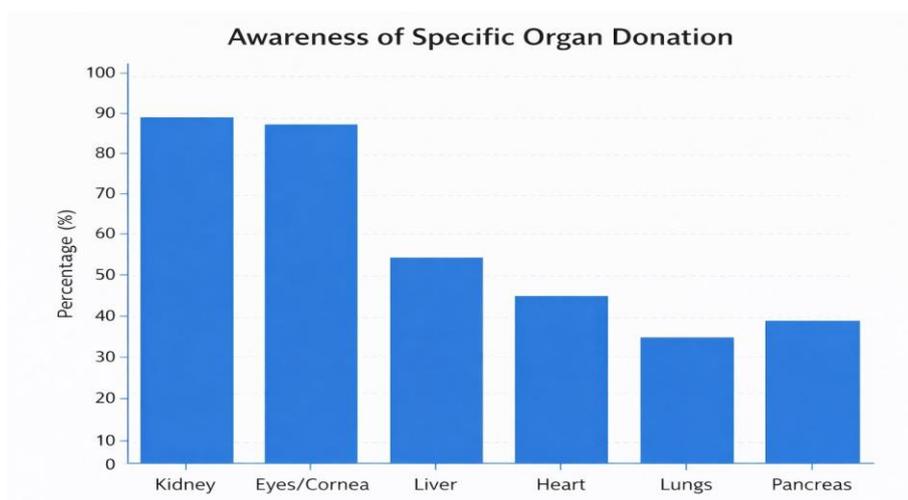


Understanding of Brain Death (Among those aware, n=790):

- Correct (Irreversible brain function loss): **47.3%**
- Incorrect (Believed recovery is possible): **31.9%**
- Equated it to Coma: **29.3%**
- Other Misconceptions (e.g., psychiatric illness): **12.9%**

Knowledge of Donatable Organs:

- **Chart: Awareness of Specific Organ Donation**
A bar chart showing awareness levels for different organs.
- Kidney: **90.7%**
- Eyes/Cornea: **87.1%**
- Liver: **50.9%**
- Heart: **46.5%**
- Lungs: **28.7%**
- Pancreas: **38%**



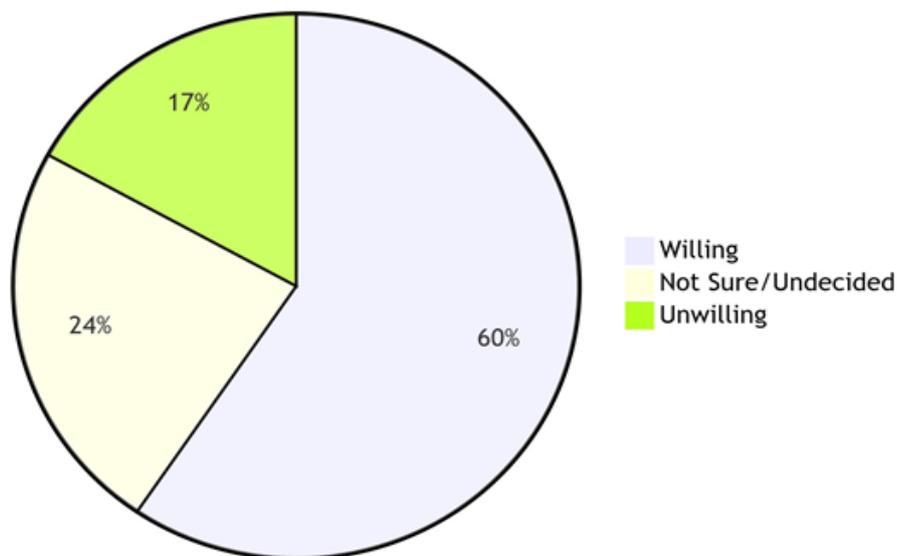
Attitudes and Beliefs:

Statement	Strongly Agree/Agree	Neutral	Disagree/Strongly Disagree
Organ donation is a noble act that saves lives.	88%	8%	4%

My religion supports organ donation.	72%	18%	10%
I trust doctors to save my life even if I am a registered organ donor.	68%	20%	12%

Willingness for Organ Donation:

- Willing to donate own organs after death: **59.5%**
- Would consent for a brain-dead relative's donation: **51%**
- Not Sure/Undecided: **25%**
- Unwilling: **17%**



Primary Barriers to Donation:

- Religious Beliefs: **29.8%**
- Distrust in Healthcare System: **26.9%**
- Fear of premature declaration of death.
- Belief that organs are misused or favor the rich.
- Fear of Body Disfigurement: **~6%**
- Family Opposition: Major cited reason.

Legal Awareness:

Only **39.5%** of participants were aware of any law governing organ donation in India (e.g., THOA Act).

DISCUSSION

Awareness-Acceptance Gap: a high awareness of organ donation (84.5%) does not translate directly into high willingness (59.5%) or practice. Only 26.4% in their study were ready to sign a pledge card.

The Brain Death Conundrum: A critical finding is the significant misunderstanding of brain death. While 79% had heard the term, less than half understood its irreversibility. This is a major barrier, as consent for donation often relies on the family's comprehension that their loved one is legally deceased

Socio-Demographic Correlates: Higher education levels were significantly associated with better awareness and a more positive attitude towards donation ($p < 0.001$).

Trust as a Key Factor: Distrust in the healthcare system and misconceptions about the integrity of the body after donation remain powerful deterrents, as highlighted across all referenced studies.

CONCLUSION

There exists a moderate level of awareness regarding organ donation and brain death among the study population. However, this is marred by profound knowledge gaps, particularly regarding the irreversibility of brain death and the legal framework.

Socio-cultural and religious barriers, coupled with a lack of trust in the medical system, significantly hinder the conversion of awareness into actual donation.

Educational interventions must be targeted, especially towards less-educated and rural populations, to clarify misconceptions and build trust.

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