

**Attitudes and awareness about organ donation
amongst patients visiting Ramathibodi Hospital: An in-
depth interview qualitative research**

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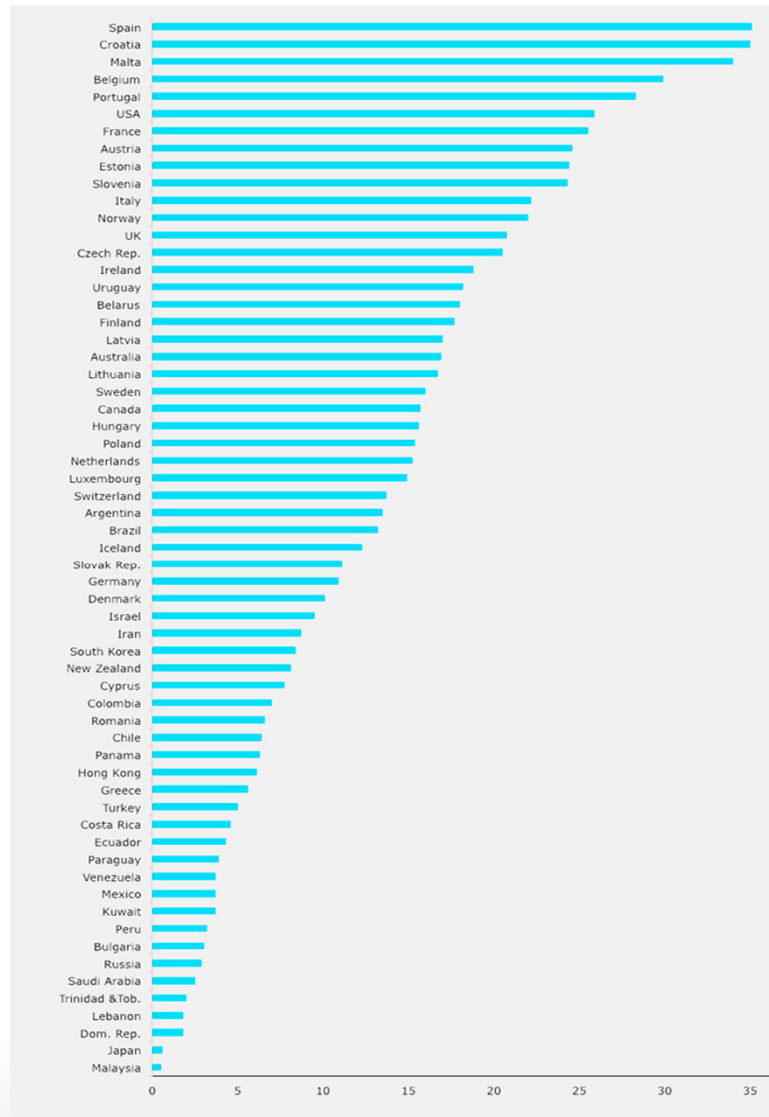
Research Permission for recruitment was approved from Mahidol University, Research and Ethics Committee

Conflict of Interest – None



“ In 2014, despite 4,431 people were awaiting for an organ transplant, only 432 people actually received an organ”

Worldwide deceased donor rates 2013



International Registry in Organ Donation and Transplantation <http://www.irodat.org/>

- Deceased organ donation is only possible following brain death criteria
- Brain death usually arises following traumatic death where motor vehicle accidents and hemorrhagic stroke is the leading cause
- Vital organs such as heart, lungs, liver, kidneys maybe harvested from the deceased donor for transplantation

Research design, data collection and analysis

- Qualitative study conducted at Ramathibodi Hospital Department of Family Medicine
- Semi structured interview took place between 1st May 2016 – 30th June 2016
- 38 participants from all around the country interviewed ranging between 8 minutes – 32 minutes
- Data analyzed using six stage thematic analysis

Theme 1:

Perception on Organ Donation

Organ Donor v Body Donor

- More than 95% (36 out of 38) of interviewed patient have heard about organ donation but many had difficulty differentiating between an organ donor from body donor
- “Ajarn Yai” or the “great teacher” is the term given to patient who donate their body for medical sciences
- Highly respected and considered a virtuous act amongst many Buddhist believer





Understanding the registration process

- More than half of the participant could not identify hospitals involved in registration process (20 out of 38)
- 13% (5 out of 38) participant have already registered their wish of becoming an organ donor
- 1 participant had registered to become a body donor to become Ajarn Yai
- The process of registration seems to be difficult by many participants

Theme 2:

Personal View on death and dying

Death as a part of life

- One participant said “ the act of giving an organ away after death would make his children feel proud of him and it would also encourage them to always do good for others”.
- Many believe about spirit leaving body after death

Reincarnation

- Many participants believe in reincarnation and had mixed feelings about the consequences of organ donation on their future life
- One participant said “organ donation could make a difference for another 5 families, at the same time my daughter still question my decision and felt that she also needs to be consulted and her feelings also matters
- Some had fear talking about the topic

Theme 3 : Religious beleif and organ donation

Religious belief and organ donation

- **Clarifying Uncertainty “Virtue” or “sin”**
- **40% (15 out of 38) participants beleived that as a buddhist, by giving an organ to a person who needs is in line with buddhist teaching and seen as a virtue**
- **54% (20 out of 38) participants despite being a buddhist, stated that religion had no influence on their decision making**
- **5 of the 6 participant who were already a registered organ donor stated that religion had no influence on their decision making**

The good karma

Many participants mentioned about Karma

“By doing good, these virtues will gradually increase and allow us to be born healthy with no disease, donating an organ is considered a virtue and there is no need to fear that an organ would be missing, in fact the consequences of such virtuous act will lead to a better life in the future”.

Theme 4: Organ Donation and National Identification Card

Organ donation and national identity card



- More than 95% of the participant supported the idea of having organ donation listed on their national identification card
- One participant said “If person had died from an accident and information being an organ donor had been recorded, this would help speed up the process allowing the person to be transferred urgently to hospital and commence with the organ harvesting process, but in the absence of such data it makes more difficult and you run a risk of losing the opportunity to harvest”
- For participants whom rejected the idea due to fears about organ trafficking

Discussion

- Thai people are altruistic and have willingness to help if had the opportunity
- Lack of understanding about organ donation process including the difference between organ donor and body donor
- Communication about organ request is quite sensitive and require skilled personal to understand and appreciate the grief process. Something we need to learn from the Spain Model and involvement of transplant coordinators
- Dignity in caring for greiving family

