



Attitudes of the Third-Year Nursing Students Toward Organ Donation: Cross-Sectional Study

B. Akpınar Söylemez^{a,*} and Y.S. Ordin^b

^aDepartment of Internal Medicine Nursing, Dokuz Eylül University Faculty of Nursing, Izmir, Turkey; and ^bDepartment of Surgical Nursing, Dokuz Eylül University Faculty of Nursing, Izmir, Turkey

ABSTRACT

Background. Health professionals can affect attitudes toward organ donation in society; therefore, priority should be given to exploration of attitudes of nursing students as important prospective members of the health profession. The goal of this study was to assess nursing students' attitudes and volunteerism toward organ donation.

Methods. This descriptive study was performed on 240 third-year nursing students in Turkey between February 2016 and April 2016. Purposive sampling and a cross-sectional survey were used. Data were collected by using the Organ Donation Attitudes Scale, a valid and reliable instrument for determining attitudes toward organ donation in Turkey. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and ratio), and correlation analyses were used.

Results. The mean age of the students, more than one half of whom were female (84.83%), was 21.63 ± 1.19 years. The students achieved mean scores of 105.84 ± 12.61 and 45.91 ± 15.74 for positive and negative items, respectively, on the Organ Donation Attitudes Scale. The positive items focus on humanity and moral conviction, and the negative items focus on fears of medical neglect and fears of bodily mutilation. The mean scores for humanity and moral conviction, fears of medical neglect, and fears of bodily mutilation were 105.84 ± 12.61 , 22.58 ± 9.25 , and 23.32 ± 8.66 .

Conclusions. The students displayed positive attitudes toward organ donation and volunteerism. They may have humanitarian and charitable feelings about organ donation but hesitate to commit because of their fear of bodily mutilation and fears of medical neglect.

It is known that the organ transplantations performed fulfill only 10% of all organ transplantation needs [1]. It is therefore necessary to prioritize transplantations from cadavers from a medical, ethical, and social point of view [2]. The number of cadaveric donors per 1 million is 20 to 25 in European countries and 5.3 in Turkey [3]. Because the number of cadaveric donors is very low in Turkey, organ transplants are obtained from live donors. According to data from the Turkish Ministry of Health issued in 2014, the rates of transplantations from live donors and cadaveric donors were 75% and 25%, respectively [4]. These data indicate that the rate of organ donation is low and that attempts to increase this rate are needed in Turkey.

In the international literature related to organ donation, the process emphasizes the role of health professionals in practice [5]. In fact, they play an important part in informing the society about organ donations and brain death, building trust for the health care system and enabling family members to discuss organ donations [6]. Nurses, as members of the health profession, can identify potential donors and have the potential to influence decision-making processes in

*Address correspondence to Burcu Akpınar Söylemez, RN, PhD, Department of Internal Medicine Nursing, Dokuz Eylül University Faculty of Nursing, Izmir 35340, Turkey. E-mail: burcu.akpinar@deu.edu.tr

families of brain-dead patients. Therefore, it is necessary to determine attitudes of nurses, especially nursing students, toward organ donations. It has been reported that nursing students in many countries, including Spain [7], Italy [8], and China [9], support organ donation but do not have enough information about the topic.

Previous studies on Turkish nursing students' opinions about organ donation revealed that most of the students considered organ donation important but did not donate their organs [10–15]. Several studies have shown that Turkish nursing students even have some negative thoughts about the issue due to their beliefs [12,13,16], considering donation as an intervention on the body after death [14,16], illegal practices [15], worrying that their organs can be given to someone they do not like, and organ donation reminding them of death [16]. It has also been reported that students do not have sufficient information about organ donation [11,13,14]. Data about opinions of nursing students in Turkey have been collected with questionnaires that have not been tested for their validity and reliability [10,11,14,16–19]. It is necessary to obtain data with valid and reliable tools so that their results can be compared with those from other countries. The focus of the present study therefore was directed toward determining the attitudes of third-year nursing students toward organ donation by using a valid and reliable measurement tool.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive study design was used in this study to evaluate third-year nursing students' attitudes toward organ donation.

Participants

Purposive sampling was used, with only third-year students selected for study. Third-year students were chosen because the course about organ donation was available to third-year students only in the curriculum. This group was chosen because only these students had opportunities for critical thinking about organ donation, and these attitudes can be influenced by education.

The study included 243 third-year students of the Faculty of Nursing at a university in the western part of Turkey. No students were excluded. Questionnaire forms were distributed to the 243 students at the end of courses by the researchers and were collected again by the researchers after the students completed the surveys. After elimination of those surveys not filled in completely or including misinformation, analyses were conducted on 240 (99%) participants. The study protocol was approved by the Dokuz Eylül University Non-Invasive Clinical Research Ethical Committee and was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. Written informed consent was obtained from all the participants before data collection. Approval was given by the nursing faculty where the study was conducted.

Data were collected by using the Organ Donation Attitudes Scale (ODAS), which is a valid and reliable self-report instrument for determining attitudes toward organ donation in Turkey. ODAS is a 6-point Likert scale; 1 corresponds to strongly agree and 6 corresponds to strongly disagree. It consists of 40 items, 20 of which are negative statements and 20 are positive statements [20]. The score to be obtained varies between 20 and 120 for both positive and

negative dimensions of the scale. A high score from the positive dimension of the ODAS indicates a positive attitude toward organ donation, and a low score indicates a negative attitude. Items of the positive dimension focus on humanity and moral conviction, and items of the negative dimension focus on fears of medical neglect (FMN) and fears of bodily mutilation (FBM). The validity and the reliability of the ODAS for the Turkish population were examined by Yazici Sayin [20]. The internal consistency reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.857 for the scale, 0.925 for the positive dimension, and 0.914 for the negative dimension in Turkey. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha was 0.799 and 0.853 for the positive and negative dimensions of the ODAS, respectively.

Data Collection

This study was conducted between February 2016 and April 2016. The instrument was distributed to the students and then collected by researchers after the students completed the survey. It took 10 to 15 minutes for the participants to complete the instrument.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by using SPSS software (IBM SPSS Statistics, IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY, United States). Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and ratio) were used for data analysis.

RESULTS

The participants were aged 19 to 27 years (mean age, 21.63 ± 1.19 years). The sample was predominately female (84.83%). The mean score of the participants was 105.84 ± 12.61 for the positive dimension of the ODAS and 45.91 ± 15.74 for the negative dimension of the scale. The mean scores for humanity and moral conviction, FMN, and FBM were 105.84 ± 12.61, 22.58 ± 9.25, and 23.32 ± 8.66, respectively.

Overall, 87.1% of the participants (n = 209) never agreed or mostly disagreed with item 19 ("organs should not be donated due to religious beliefs"; mean score, 1.62 ± 1.12). In addition, 85.1% of the participants (n = 204) never agreed or mostly disagreed with item 5 ("bodily integrity is important after death"; mean score, 1.62 ± 1.16). Lastly, 92.1% of the participants (n = 221) completely and mostly agreed with item 18 ("hearing that there are people whose lives are saved thanks to organ donations indicates importance of donation"; mean score, 5.82 ± 3.97).

The organs that the participants considered to be the most important to donate were as follows: heart (92.5%), bone marrow (88.8%), kidney (88.3%), lung (85.8%), cardiac valve (84.6%), liver (80.4%), eye (63.3%), pancreas (61.3%), bone (56.7%), and skin (46.3%). Seventy-three participants never thought to donate some organs. These organs were as follows: face (60.3%, thinking that their family become sad when they see their face after death), genitalia (42.5%, thinking that it is not ethical), skin (42.5%, thinking that it damages physical integrity), extremities (38.3% thinking that it damages physical integrity), eyes (20.5%, thinking that it damages physical integrity), and heart (8.2%, mostly for emotional reasons).

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