



Emigration From Puerto Rico to Florida: Multivariate Analysis of Factors That Condition Attitudes of the Puerto Rican Population Toward Organ Donation for Transplant

A. Ríos^{a,b,c,*}, A.I. López-Navas^{a,d}, Á. Sánchez^a, L. Martínez-Alarcón^{a,c}, M.A. Ayala^{a,e}, G. Garrido^f, M.J. Sebastián^{a,g}, G. Ramis^{a,b,c}, A.M. Hernández^{a,h}, P. Ramírez^{a,b,c}, and P. Parrilla^{a,b,c}

^aProyecto Colaborativo Internacional Donante (“International Collaborative Donor Project”), Murcia, Spain; ^bDepartment of Surgery, Paediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Murcia, Murcia, Spain; ^cTransplant Unit, Surgery Service, IMIB–Hospital Clínico Universitario Virgen de la Arrixaca, Murcia, Spain; ^dDepartment of Psychology, Catholic University of Murcia, UCAM, Murcia, Spain; ^eHospital Regional de Alta Especialidad del Bajío, León, Guanajuato, Mexico; ^fOrganización Nacional de Trasplantes, Spain; ^gCoordinación de Trasplantes, UMAE Hospital de Especialidades No. 25 IMSS, Monterrey, Mexico; and ^hEndocrinology and Nutrition Service, Hospital Clínico Universitario Virgen de la Arrixaca, Murcia, Spain

ABSTRACT

Background. The Puerto Rican population represents one of the largest immigration groups in Florida, and this has an impact on the organ transplant donation process. Our aim was to analyze attitudes toward organ donation among Puerto Ricans who currently reside in the state of Florida (USA).

Methods. The population screened consisted of individuals >15 years old, who were born in Puerto Rico, living in Florida, and awaiting organs for transplant. All participants completed the “PCID-DTO Rios” questionnaire. Random selection was done according to stratification. Support from immigration associations in Spain was needed for advice on the locations of potential respondents. Study participation was anonymized and self-administered.

Results. There were 259 respondents, 37% (n = 95) were in favor of donation, 36% (n = 93) were against donation, and 27% (n = 71) were undecided. The variables associated with these attitudes were: age ($P = .017$); civil status ($P = .021$); level of education ($P < .001$); previous experience with donation and transplant ($P < .001$); attitude toward organ donation of a relative ($P < .001$); carrying out pro-social activities ($P < .001$); discussing the issue of transplant with the family ($P < .001$) or couple ($P < .001$); attitude toward incineration ($P < .001$), burial ($P < .001$), and autopsy ($P < .001$); fear of mutilation after donation ($P < .001$); and religious beliefs ($P < .001$). In the multivariate study, it remained an independent variable to have discussed the issue at the family level (odds ratio = 11.627; $P = .009$).

Conclusion. The Puerto Rican study population residing in Florida has an unfavorable attitude toward organ donation.

PUERTO Rican and Cuban populations are 2 of the largest immigration groups in Florida, located mainly in the Miami area. The USA has the second largest Latin American population in the world, after Mexico. Of the total Latin American population in the USA, most live in the southern and western part of the country, according to the Center of Demographic Resources. The 2010 Census,

which identified all Latin Americans with legal resident status, showed that 22% of Florida’s inhabitants are Latin

*Address correspondence to Antonio Ríos Zambudio, Avenida de la Libertad No. 208, Casillas 30007 Murcia, Spain. E-mail: arzrios@um.es

American. In addition, there is a significant population of Latin Americans living there illegally or without a residence permit. Accordingly, this remarkable increase in the foreign population is creating new social and demographic realities.

It has been described that the resident Puerto Rican population in the USA has low organ donation rates [1]. Therefore, it is important to understand their attitude toward organ donation [2–5]. The objective of this study was to identify attitudes toward organ donation among Puerto Ricans living in the state of Florida (USA).

METHODS

Population Screened

According to US Census data (<http://www.census.gov>) there are 847,500 Puerto Ricans living in Florida. Various immigration aid associations have anonymously indicated there are approximately 98,000 additional people without documentation living in Florida. In total, a population of 945,550 was estimated.

Inclusion Criteria

All participants were >15 years old and stratified by age and gender, resulting in a total of 269 subjects. A random representative sample was obtained, stratified according to gender and age (men: $n = 21$ at 15–25 years old, 68 at 26–45 years, 47 at 46–65 years, and 8 at >65 years; women: 20, 55, 40, and 10, respectively). The sample was obtained in the context of the participants' legal situation: (1) those with legal documentation—the US Census assesses the number of people of every nationality living in Florida, providing data on age, gender, and municipality of residence (see <http://www.census.gov>); and (2) the population without legal documentation—information about this population is not as accurate, as there is no “official” information. Various immigration associations were consulted to assist in estimating the size of the undocumented group and, given the circumstances associated with this population, confidential information was obtained. An approximate population census was conducted with information on age, gender, and municipality of residence. The sample was stratified by age and gender according to these approximate data.

Appraisal Tool

Attitude was assessed using a validated questionnaire of attitude toward Organ Donation and Transplantation (PCID-DTO Ríos: A Questionnaire by the International Collaborative Donor Project About Organ Donation and Transplantation [Proyecto Colaborativo Internacional Donante sobre Donación y Trasplante de Organos], developed by Dr. Ríos). was used in this study [2,3,6]. This questionnaire includes items distributed in 4 subscales of factors, and was validated in a Spanish population, showing a total explained variance of 63.203% and a Cronbach's α reliability coefficient of 0.834.

Fieldwork Research

A random population was surveyed according to the stratification. Support from immigration associations in Florida was needed to advice on the location of potential respondents. Completion of the questionnaire was anonymized and self-administered. Verbal consent was obtained before study participation.

Statistics

Descriptive statistics were performed, and Student's t test, chi-square test, Fisher's exact test, and logistic regression analysis were applied.

RESULTS

Attitude Toward Cadaveric Organ Donation

A total of 259 respondents were included in the study. Thirty-seven percent ($n = 95$) were in favor of donation of the own organs after death, 36% ($n = 93$) were against donation, and 27% ($n = 71$) were undecided (Table 1).

Bivariate Analysis of Factors That Determined Attitude

Among the sociopersonal variables, those respondents with a more favorable attitude toward organ donation and transplant were youngest ($P < .001$), married vs unmarried (44% vs 27%; $P = .021$), and university-educated vs no academic education (100% vs 19%; $P < .001$). With regard to variables related to organ donation and transplant, respondents having previous experience with donation or transplantation had a more favorable attitude (100% vs 31%; $P < .001$). For variables of social dimension, respondents accepting of donation of organs of a relative had a more favorable attitude toward donation (68% vs 18%; $P < .001$), as did those who had already discussed this issue with their family (77% vs 32%; $P < .001$), and those with a partner in favor of transplant (100% vs 22%; $P < .001$). As for religious variables, the most favorable attitude was seen among those who were nonreligious or considered themselves atheist/agnostic (50%; $P < .001$). Among respondents who professed a religious affiliation, the attitude was more favorable among those who were aware that their religion favors organ transplantation (100% vs 27%; $P < .001$). Finally, for variables associated with treatment of the body after death, there was a more favorable attitude among those unconcerned about the possible mutilation of the body after donation (49% vs 18%; $P < .001$) and those who would accept incineration (73% vs 33%; $P < .001$), and, if necessary, autopsy (100% vs 32%; $P < .001$).

Multivariate Analysis of Factors That Determine Attitude

In the multivariate study, a positive attitude persisted as an independent variable with regard to discussing the topic of organ transplantation at the family level (odds ratio [OR] = 11.627; $P = .009$).

DISCUSSION

Puerto Rico is a small Caribbean country with a high rate of emigration to the USA, with some years of good donation rates [7]. There have been few studies in Caribbean and South American countries assessing attitudes toward organ donation. Attitudes in favor of donation have ranged from 50% to 80%. Emigration of the Latin American population is a major issue for both Spain and the USA. However, Caribbean

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