



# Does the Attitude Toward Organ Donation Change as a Function of the Country Where People Emigrate? Study Between Uruguayan Emigrants to the United States and Spain

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction.** The Uruguayan population is sensitized toward transplantation. However, it has not been studied how this awareness can change when emigrating to different countries.

**Objective.** To analyze the attitude toward cadaveric organ donation and living organ donation between the Uruguayan population residing in Florida (United States) and the Uruguayan population residing in Spain.

**Method.** Adults born in Uruguay and residing in Florida and Spain were screened. The questionnaire “PCID–DTO Ríos” (donation of cadaveric organs) and “PCID–DVR Ríos” (living renal donation) were used. Subjects were randomly selected according to age and gender stratification. Support from Latin-American immigration associations in Spain and Florida was needed. The survey was anonymized and self-administered. Verbal consent was obtained to collaborate in the study.

**Results.** Because the emigrant population to Spain is far larger than the emigrant population to the United States, a 2:1 proportional sampling was performed ( $n = 132$ ). Sixty-seven percent of residents in Spain were in favor of organ donation at the time of death compared with 50% among residents in Florida ( $P = .082$ ), and 100% of residents in Spain were in favor of living renal donation compared with 50% of those living in Florida ( $P < .001$ ).

**Conclusions.** The attitude toward donation is more favorable among Uruguayan emigrants to Spain than emigrants to the United States, especially in related kidney donation.

**O**RGAN transplantation is a fully accepted therapy whose main limitation is the scarcity of organs available [1]. To increase the number of organs to be transplanted, it is necessary to act at different levels, both organizationally and through social awareness [2–15]. Currently, immigration is a frequent and growing situation in Western European society and in the United States, a fact that is having repercussion in the world of

transplantation [2,5]. Data seem to indicate that the immigrant population presents a different attitude toward organ

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donation depending on the country where they emigrate [2,5]. In this sense, the population of Uruguay, a Latin American country of the southern cone with a population slightly higher than 3 million, is one of the most sensitized to organ donation, having among the highest donation rates in Latin America [16]. However, it has not been analyzed how this attitude can change or differ depending on the country where people emigrate. The objective of this study was to analyze the attitude toward the donation of organs for transplantation, both living and cadaveric, among the Uruguayan population that emigrated to Florida (United States) and Spain.

## METHODS

### Population Screened

The population born in Uruguay, over 15 years of age, and currently residing in the State of Florida and in Spain were screened.

### Selection of the Sample

Because the immigrant population to Spain from Uruguay is larger than the immigrant population to the United States from Uruguay, a proportional sampling of 2:1 was used for the population residing in Spain versus the population residing in Florida. The sample was stratified by age and sex, based on data from the Uruguayan emigrant population in Spain and Florida.

### Valuation Instrument

Two questionnaires were used to assess the two attitudes toward organ donation: (1) a questionnaire validated in Spanish-speaking population on attitude to organ donation for transplant, the "PCID-DTO Ríos" (Questionnaire of the "Donor International Collaborative Project" –Proyecto Colaborativo Internacional Donante, in Spanish, on organ donation and transplantation developed by Dr Ríos) [1–7], which presents a total explained variance of 63.203% and a Cronbach  $\alpha$  reliability coefficient of 0.834; and (2) a questionnaire validated in a Spanish-speaking population of attitude toward living kidney donation: "PCID-DVR Ríos" (Questionnaire of the "Donor International Collaborative Project" about Living Kidney Donation [Donación de Vivo Renal in Spanish] developed by Dr Ríos) [8–11], which presents a total explained variance of 63.995% and a Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficient of 0.778.

### Fieldwork Research

A random selection of people to survey was based on stratification. Support from immigration associations in Florida and Spain was

needed to advise on the location of potential respondents. The survey completion was anonymous and self-administered. Verbal consent was requested to assist in the study.

### Statistics

A descriptive statistic was performed, and Student  $t$ ,  $\chi^2$ , and Fisher tests were applied.

## RESULTS

A total of 132 Uruguayans were surveyed, 88 of them residing in Spain and the remaining 44 residents in Florida, maintaining the proportional sampling 2:1. Sixty-seven percent of residents in Spain were in favor of donation of the proper organs after death, compared with 50% among residents in Florida ( $P = .082$ ). Even though the percentage against donating their organs was similar among residents in Florida and Spain (23% vs 20%), there was a higher percentage of undecided in Florida than in Spain (27% vs 13%) (Table 1). One hundred percent of residents in Spain were in favor of related kidney donation, compared with 50% of those living in Florida ( $P < .001$ ). Of respondents residing in Florida, 32% were undecided or had doubts about living renal donation, and 18% were not in favor of donating (Table 1).

## DISCUSSION

Currently, Latin America maintains donation rates below 10 cadaveric donors per million people, with the exceptions of Puerto Rico or Uruguay; the low donation rate is due to the high rate of families against donation and failures in detection of brain-dead donors [16]. In Uruguay, no studies have found a positive attitude toward organ donation in the general population. There are some studies in the countries of South America, and the attitude in favor of donation ranges from 50% to 80% [17]. However, it is not possible to generalize, and there are significant differences between the different nationalities [2,5].

There are no specific data regarding the Uruguayan emigrant population, but there are data regarding the Latin American emigrant population. In Spain, the existing studies show a favorable attitude toward the donation of organs after death among the Latin American population. López et al [18], in a study with 435 Latin American residents in Spain, showed that 73.6% were in favor of

**Table 1. Attitude Toward Own Organ Donation After Death and Toward Living Related Donation Among the Uruguayans Residing in Florida (United States) and Spain**

	Uruguayan Residents in Spain (n = 88)	Uruguayan Residents in Florida (n = 44)	P Value
Own organ donation after death, n (%)			.082
In favor	59 (67%)	22 (50%)	
Undecided	11 (13%)	12 (27%)	
Against	18 (20%)	10 (23%)	
Living related kidney donation, n (%)			<.001
In favor	88 (100%)	22 (50%)	
Undecided	0	14 (32%)	
Against	0	8 (18%)	

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