Organ donation in Muslim countries: The case of Malaysia

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Summary

Background: The aim of this paper is to look into the factors influencing Malaysian Muslims' decision to become deceased organ donors in Malaysia.

Material/Methods: We approached 900 Malaysian Muslims and 779 participated in our survey, conducted in Kuala Lumpur and its suburb. We examined their willingness to become donors and the willing donors were asked why they did not pledge to become donors. Non-donors were asked why they refuse to become donors.

Results: The survey found the main reason for Malaysian Muslims not pledging their organs was due to their lack of information on organ donation and/or their lack of confidence in the government's ability to properly administer organ donation procedures. Another interesting finding is that religion is not a main deterrent to organ donation.

Conclusions: The survey suggests that Malaysia can explore many ways to encourage organ donation without having to resort to the highly controversial financial incentive option. A key to Malaysia's success or failure to increase organ donation rate lies in its ability to persuade its Muslim population (its largest population) to donate organs. This can be done by adopting a segmented, focused, and highly localized form of public education and by leveraging on existing networks involving local religious and community leaders as well as government and non-governmental institutions.

Key words: community leaders • Muslim donor • organ donation • public education • religious leaders

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