Organ Donation Campaigns: Perspective of Dialysis Patient's Family Members

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Abstract
Background: Solving the dilemma of the organ shortage in Malaysia requires educating Malaysians about organ donation and transplantation. This paper aims at exploring the average Malaysian households’ preferred channels of campaigns and the preferred campaigners in a family setting, targeting the dialysis family members.

Methods: We analyzed the responses of 350 respondents regarding organ donation campaigns. The respondents are 2 family members of 175 dialysis patients from 3 different institutions. The information on respondents’ willingness to donate and preferred method and channel of organ donation campaign were collected through questionnaire.

Results: Malaysian families have a good tendency to welcome campaigns in both the public and private (their homes) spheres. We also found that campaigns facilitated by the electronic media (Television and Radio) and executed by experienced doctors are expected to optimize the outcomes of organ donation, in general. Chi-square tests show that there are no significant differences in welcoming campaigns among ethnics. However, ethnics preferences over the campaign methods and campaigners are significantly different (P<0.05).

Conclusion: Ethnic differences imply that necessary modifications on the campaign channels and campaigners should also be taken under consideration. By identifying the preferred channel and campaigners, this study hopes to shed some light on the ways to overcome the problem of organ shortage in Malaysia.

Keywords: Organ donation, Campaigns, Dialysis patients, Family, Malaysia

Introduction

Malaysia is one of the countries facing a severe organ shortage. The Malaysian organ donation rate per million populations has been at very low levels compared to the high number of people waiting for transplantation. For example, in 2010 there were 15000 patients waiting for a kidney transplant, while the organ donation rates recorded only 0.48 donations per million populations (1). Many reasons are claimed to be behind people’s reluctance to donate their organs in living or deceased donations. However, the lack of information regarding organ donation and transplantation has been cited widely to be one of the most important aspects impeding the improvement of organ donation rates (2-5).

In the Malaysian scenario, earlier studies suggested that lack of knowledge of organ donation and transplantation is one of the main reasons, beside the lack of public trust, which make Malaysians refuse to be organ donors. Interestingly, although the country is comprised of multiple ethnic groups, the religio-cultural aspects were found to
comprehensive understanding of the targeted community; and of using accurate methods in delivering the message to potential donors. After having accurate comprehension of the targeted donors, educational campaigns should be designed based on their backgrounds, by employing the proper channels in which the campaign messages would be effectively delivered.

Conclusion

The study from Malaysia on organ donation campaigns targeted at families of dialysis patients reveals that although most of the respondents welcomed organ donation campaign, the ethnic dimension of it worth further examination. Ethnic differences imply that necessary modifications on the campaign channels and campaigners should also be taken under consideration. By identifying the preferred channel and campaigners, this study hopes to shed some light on the ways to overcome the problem of organ shortage in Malaysia.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues (Including plagiarism, Informed Consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, redundancy, etc.) have been completely observed by the authors.

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