

Organ Donation in Muslim Communities: Sharing Your Opinion With the Family

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Dear Editor

There is a high prevalence of end-stage organ dysfunction within Asian population in general and the Muslim communities are a sizable component of those ethnicities. Renal failure secondary to diabetes is top of the list¹.

32% of patients waiting for a kidney are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities². They often have a significantly longer wait for a successful match due to a shortage of suitably matched donors³. This is coupled with a shortage of suitably tissue-matched organs due to lack of Asian donors. We know that an increased HLA tissue typing mismatch is a risk factor for rejection⁴.

When considering the Muslim population, we have a variety of opinions regarding organ donations from the progressive opinions that sees this as an act of ongoing charity beyond death offering the gift of life to needy individuals⁵. Fatwas (religious opinion) have been issued by a UK-based Sunni scholar, Mufti Mohammed Zubair Butt, a Juris consult from the Institute of Islamic Jurisprudence in Bradford who In June 2019, produced a fatwa, Organ Donation and Transplantation in Islam: An Opinion and a similar one in 2000 from the European Council for Fatwa and Research^{6,7}.

On the other extreme, there is a sizable body of scholarly opinion that considers organ donation to be forbidden (Haram) and a form of body mutilation and desecration of its sanctity. The body should be buried whole without subjecting it to any unnecessary procedures or taking away any parts from, these are same views to those against autopsy it^{8,9}.

The mainstream view within the Muslim is more undecided due to the ignorance of the progressive points of view and the apprehension of the unknown and misconceptions of how the body is treated such as loss of dignity and the delay in expeditious burial which is very important in Islam¹⁰.

Research has shown that many families are not aware of their members wishes to become organ donors or that they've signed up to the register. With such differing opinions on organ donations within the Muslim communities and within the same families it becomes even more important to have an honest and frank dialogue amongst those families on this subject. The wishes of those who agree to it should be well known, respected, and accepted and thereafter honoured if they tragically die and the family is approached by the donor team¹¹.

References

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