

Study reveals Arab American views on organ donation

January 20 2011, By Heather Guenther

U.S. organ procurement organizations looking to increase donation rates among Arab Americans can turn to new University of Michigan Health System research for recruitment ideas.

U-M researchers identified various factors – from education and income levels to gender and religion – that may predict how members of this population view organ donation, says lead study author Aasim I. Padela, M.D., an emergency physician and a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholar at the U-M Health System.

“Educational attainment and acculturation into American society were strong predictors of positive attitudes toward organ donation, suggesting that promotion of organ donation should be initiated using culturally competent methods,” says Padela.

“This includes the use of Arabic language, Arabic media, social networking and partnering with Arab American community leaders,” he adds.

Educating health care providers who serve this community about the importance and process of organ donation may also increase donor registration, Padela says.

The team’s findings were recently published online in the journal *Clinical Transplantation*.

Demand for transplantable organs continues to exceed supply, particularly in minority populations, yet little is known about baseline rates of donation and transplantation in the Arab American community.

The team analyzed data from the representative, population-based Detroit Arab American Study -- a survey conducted through U-M in 2003 -- to determine what influences Arab American attitudes on organ donation.

Based on survey responses, Christian Arab Americans were more likely than Muslim Arab Americans, and women were more likely than men to believe organ donation after death was justifiable.

Higher education, higher income and greater acculturation into American society also predicted positive organ donation beliefs.

But distrust of the health care system, limited English language proficiency and lack of access to culturally and linguistically appropriate organ donation material are barriers for this group of potential organ donors, according to the study.

About 490,000 Arabs reside in Michigan and those who participated in the 2003 survey provided a glimpse into the factors associated with positive [organ donation](#) beliefs.

However, Padela says further investigation is needed to understand the study's implications.

More information: "Factors associated with positive attitudes toward organ donation in Arab Americans," *Clinical Transplantation*.

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