

Morocco seeks to encourage organ donors, overcome prejudices

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Morocco launched a campaign Wednesday to encourage organ donations that will include a programme to train imams to teach that the practice is not contrary to Islam, the health minister said.

The conservative North African country falls well behind in the number of organs transplanted each year, Housseine el-Ouardi said at the opening of a national symposium to encourage donations.

Between 2012 and 2014, there were only 125 kidney and five [liver transplants](#) in the kingdom, he said.

"These figures are below the average for the developed world," he said, noting that the numbers in France were 9,150 and 3,181, respectively, during the same period.

And due in part to the fact that many people believe Islam prohibits transplants, only 0.4 percent of Moroccans express willingness to donate organs, compared with 24.8 percent in France.

Benyoussef Ramdani, director of Morocco's organ donor advisory group, said that more than 7,000 patients were in need of [transplant surgery](#) in the kingdom.

"The number of people with diabetes and [kidney failure](#) has increased due to modern lifestyles," he said.

Authorities have tried to raise donor awareness for years, naming October 17 as "national organ donor day" and opening a national register for those in need of a [replacement organ](#).

Islamist Justice Minister Mustapha Ramid has announced that he will donate his organs when he dies as part of ongoing efforts to convince the population the practice is not contrary to Islamic teaching.

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