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### Organ Donation and Religion: An Annotated Bibliography

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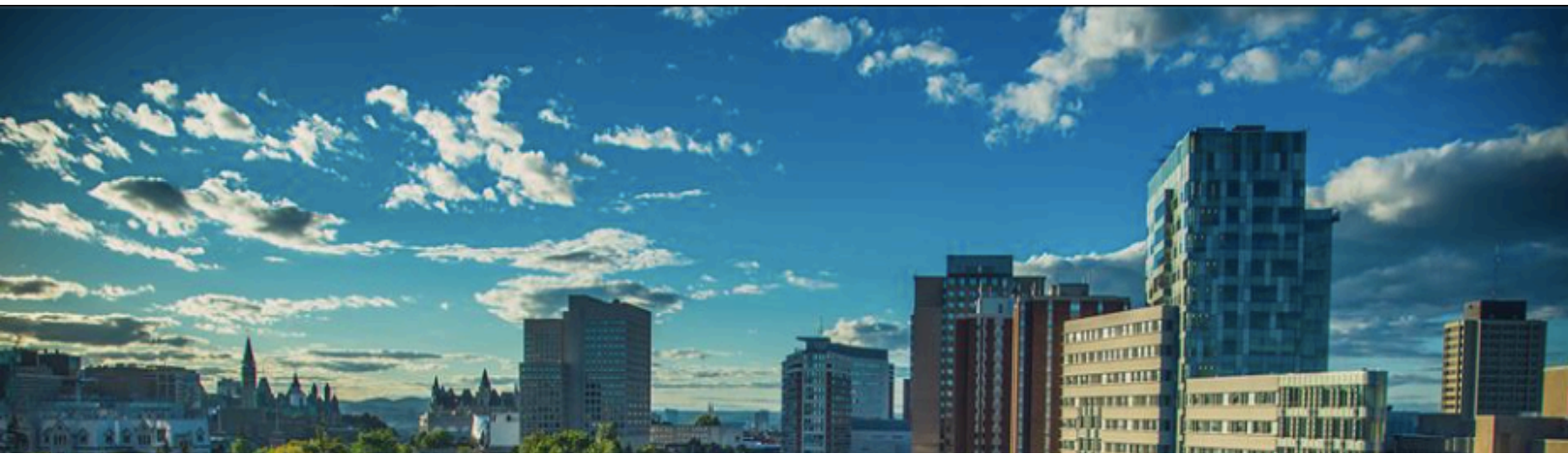


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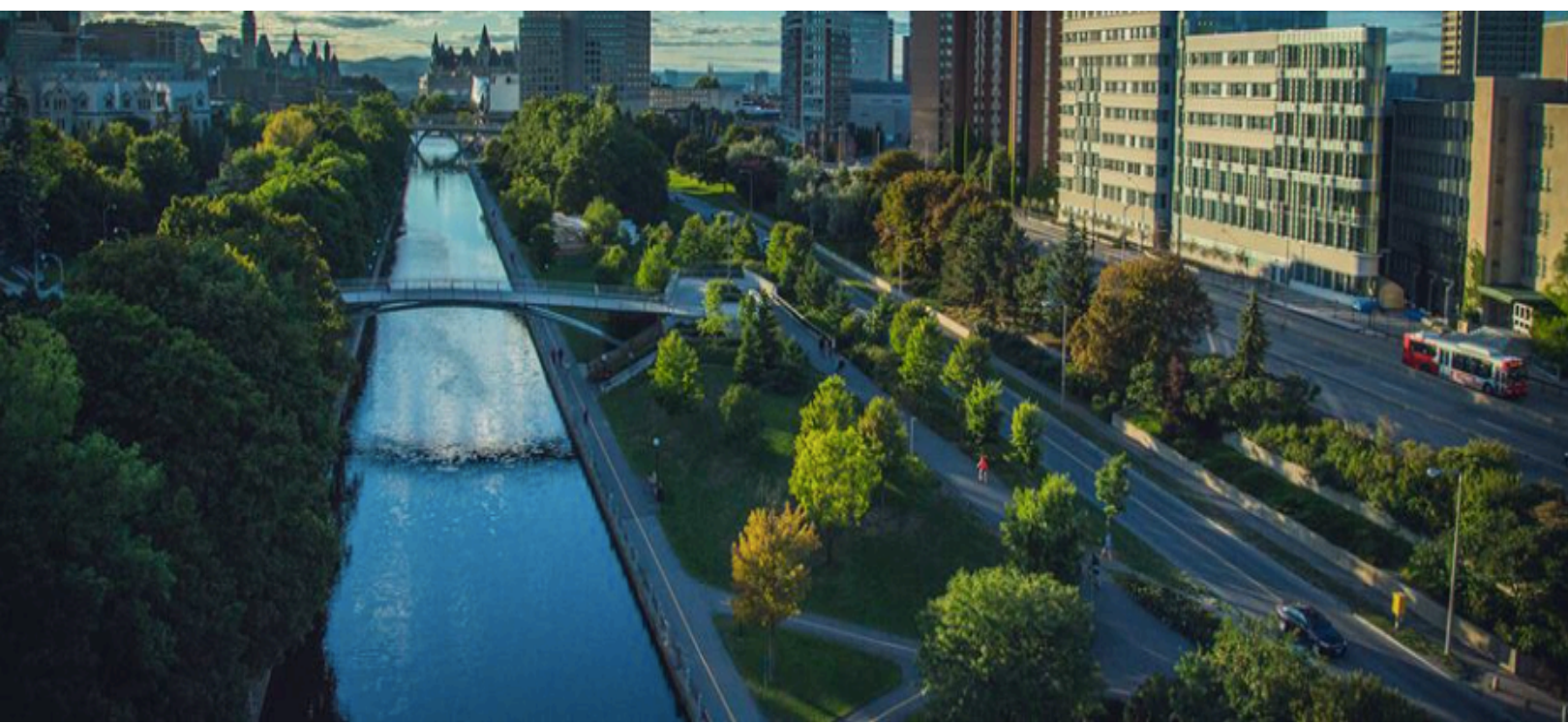


# Organ Donation and Religion: An Annotated Bibliography

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## **Organ Donation and Religion: An Annotated Bibliography<sup>i</sup>**

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Health beliefs of Muslims concerning organ  
donation, Muslims and health, Organ  
donation, Organ donation practices of  
Muslims, Religion, Religion and health.

### **Introduction**

This brief annotated bibliography presents a synopsis of select literature on the topic 'Organ Donation and Religion' published between 1993 and 2017. The purpose is to review existing research from authoritative sources and to determine the beliefs of the general public versus those of religious experts on the topic. Searched databases include Scholars Portal, PubMed, Google Scholar, and the University of Ottawa Library databases on the ProQuest platform. Although there are several studies which discuss in broad terms the influence of religion on the beliefs and attitudes toward organ donation, few studies explore the beliefs and practices of Muslims in relation to organ donation. As shown in the

annotated bibliography, the majority of the articles reviewed indicate multiple barriers to organ donation and transplantation in which religion is often a factor. Organ donation is considered controversial and ethically ambiguous, because it is neither condemned nor encouraged in any religious texts. This notion leaves room for interpretation, in which religious scholars argue that: 1) organ donation and transplantation is a charitable act of love and kindness, and/or 2) God created the body to be whole and thus any modifications or removal of organs is wrong and will leave people incomplete in the afterlife. Religious scholars have interpreted scriptures and have issued fatwas declaring organ donation is permitted in Islam. However, even with 'permission' from religious leaders, many individuals face obstacles in relation to donation such as: fear and mistrust of the medical or health care systems, controversy surrounding criteria and death determination (e.g., brain death), lack of information, and contradictory commitment to one's family, culture, or religious ideals and beliefs.

Many scholars, as mentioned in the articles reviewed, stress the importance of faith leaders in corrective intervention processes. There is a need for increased education, knowledge, and open communication between faith leaders, medical personnel, and the general public in relation to organ donation. Increasing public knowledge and education concerning the topic can be done in various ways such as: 1) the re-education or further education of faith leaders, 2) media campaigns that address barriers in Muslim or other religious communities, and

3) culturally and religiously appropriate care and targeted campaigning toward these minority groups to ultimately educate and increase rates of donation.

With the uncertainty and lack of guidance related to organ donation and transplantation in a religious context, we have organized our selected publications under two themes: public opinion and expert opinion. Several of the articles also offer and examine solutions or proposals for organ donation recruitment in religious communities, and how health care systems, along with the professionals working within them, can better understand and accommodate their fears and needs. It is important to note that although much of the research is international, many articles originated from United Kingdom, Australia, and Turkey.

### **Journal Articles**

#### **Public Opinion**

Almeida, N., & Almeida, A. (2013). Community attitudes toward kidney donation in India. *Transplantation Proceedings*, 45(4), 1307-1309.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.transproceed.2013.01.038>

The purpose of this research study was to determine the attitudes toward and levels of kidney donation in India, especially since there has been very little progress in improving the kidney donation rates in this country. The study comprised two different sections (A and B). The first, section A, had

84 participants from Mumbai, varying in age, religious background, and gender, and they focused on knowledge and attitudes toward organ donation. The second, section B, had 155 participants from Mumbai, also varying in age, religious background, and gender, focusing more specifically on the attitudes toward cadaver kidney donation. All participants completed a questionnaire. The study found that most participants had an average level of awareness regarding kidney donation. Results from study A show that 71.4% understood that an HIV/AIDS or cancer patient would not be eligible to donate. Only 48.8% were aware that organ donation was permitted by all religions in India, and that people did not specifically need to have it written in their will to donate. Hindus and Christians generally had a higher level of awareness and a more positive attitude than did Muslims. Results from study B show that many participants (75.9%) were willing to donate a kidney after death. Reasons to donate included from reducing kidney patients' suffering to improving one's quality of life, performing a good deed after death, and allowing others to use an organ that the deceased obviously have no need for.

Andrews, A. M., Zhang, N., Magee, J. C., Chapman, R., Langford, A. T., & Resnicow, K. (2012). Increasing donor designation through black churches: Results of a randomized trial. *Progress in transplantation*, 22(2), 161-167.  
<https://doi.org/10.7182/pit2012281>

The purpose of this study was to examine factors related to why African Americans

were reluctant to donate their organs, resulting in there being a disproportionately large group awaiting transplant in the United States. The study examined the attitudes and beliefs toward organ donation held by African American respondents, it also examined how reformed interventions held by the African American church would affect attitudes or rates of donation among this selected population.

The study assigned churches to act as intervention groups, where 1254 African American respondents participated in a survey describing their attitudes toward organ donation and providing information on other sociodemographic factors. The churches acted as intervention groups providing peer to peer motivation to donate. The study concluded that the church has a large influence over its African American community, which could be beneficial when trying to increase donor awareness and actual rates of donation. An emphasis was placed on the increased need for education and 'peer to peer' motivation in relation to organ donation in general and also in the African American communities.

Chakradhar, K., Doshi, D., Reddy, B. S., Kulkarni, S., Reddy, M. P., & Reddy, S. S. (2016). Knowledge, attitude and practice regarding organ donation among Indian dental students. *International Journal of Organ Transplantation Medicine*, 7(1), 28-35.

The authors of this study examined the shortage of organs for transplantation in India. In India, of the 9.5 million annual

deaths, 100,000 were due to organ failure, indicating an obvious need for organ donation and transplantation. This study aimed to analyze the knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes regarding organ donation among undergraduate dental students of the Panineeya Institute of Dental Sciences and Hospital in Hyderabad, India. 298 undergraduate students at the Panineeya Institute participated in a cross-sectional study, in which they completed a self-administered questionnaire assessing their knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding organ donation. Of the 298 participating undergraduate dental students, 238 female students and 6 male students completed the questionnaire. 73.5% of respondents were Hindus, 15.4% were Muslims, with 11.1% being Christian, Jains, or Atheists. Generally, women held more knowledge than men, and typically held more positive attitudes toward donation. Hindus held more positive attitudes toward donation than did Muslims, Christians, Jains, or Atheists, but Christians, Jains, and Atheists held more overall knowledge about donation and transplantation than the Hindu or Muslim respondents. The authors concluded that the levels of positive attitudes and practices among the dental students who participated in the study were low. While there were not sufficient male respondents to adequately examine the gendered differences in opinion, overall, Hindu women held the most favorable view of organ donation among the surveyed groups of students.

El-Shoubaki, H., & Bener, A., (2005). Public knowledge and attitudes toward organ donation and transplantation: A cross-cultural study. *Transplantation Proceedings*, 37, 1993-1997.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.transproceed.2005.03.014>

The authors of this study examined knowledge, attitudes, awareness, and determinants of organ donation and transplantation among communities and health care professionals in Qatar. This cross-sectional study used multistage sampling of 1600 Qataris and non-Qataris, ages 17+, of which 1305 (81.5%) participated. The study found large differences between Qataris and non-Qataris in terms of age, education level, and socioeconomic status that were potential variables in attitudes and willingness to donate. Generally, only 37.8% of Qataris, and 32.8% of non-Qataris were willing to donate, and most stressed that they would prefer to donate to close family members or friends. 83.8% of participants did not agree with incentive-based approaches to donating organs. Overall, the study maintains that it is not the individual's 'fault' for not participating in organ donation, rather, the blame should be put on the health system and health education system for not adequately informing or encouraging potential donors. Thus, there is a need for greater awareness regarding organ donation to increase participation and knowledge among Qataris and non-Qataris to improve overall attitudes, knowledge, and rates of donation.

Exley, C., Sim, J., Reid, N., Jackson, S., & West, N. (1996). Attitudes and beliefs within the Sikh community regarding organ donation: a pilot study. *Social Science & Medicine*, 43(1), 23-28.  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536\(95\)00320-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(95)00320-7)

To better understand the impact religion has on the shortage of organs for transplantation in the United Kingdom, particularly amongst the Asian population, the authors conducted one on one and group interviews with members of the Sikh community, specifically looking at their attitudes and beliefs regarding organ donation. The authors interviewed 22 people, representing the Sikh community in Coventry, UK. The authors aimed to find out the prevailing attitudes concerning organ transplantation and also looked into the impact and reception of a Department of Health campaign. Generally, transplantation was positively viewed by those interviewed and was seen as a compatible way of exhibiting altruism within the Sikh religion. The authors found that there was a general skepticism regarding mutilation and reincarnation, as well as the clinical transplantation process. The study concluded that the overall lack of information concerning organ transplantation and donation seemed to be a larger barrier than are religion or culture, making increased education and awareness a priority to increase donor rates among this population.

Gillman, J. (1999). Religious perspectives on organ donation. *Critical Care Nursing Quarterly*, 22(3), 19-29.  
[DOI: 10.1097/00002727-199911000-00005](https://doi.org/10.1097/00002727-199911000-00005)

This article was written with the efforts to better understand the stance that various religions take on organ donation by examining the preexisting literature (both religious and scientific) and interviewing families of differing faiths. The author found that most religious groups generally viewed organ donation as positive and were generally supportive and encouraging of such an act. The author examined tensions between culture and religion; such issues and concerns included the respect and handling of the deceased's body, which the author suggested need to be discussed and addressed in a personal and informed matter. Although most religions studied in this article promote organ donation as a positive act, traditional Confucian scholars and certain Islamic faith leaders teach that the body must be preserved (the body must be kept as God created it – that is to say whole) and therefore oppose organ donation. The author maintained that the decision to donate one's organs would likely be made easier with a multidisciplinary approach, with clear and open communication among individuals involved in the decision-making process.

Ginossar, T., Benavidez, J., Gillooly, Z. D., Attreya, K. A., Nguyen, H., & Bentley, J. (2017). Ethnic/Racial, religious, and demographic predictors of organ donor registration status among young adults in the southwestern United States. *Progress in Transplantation*, 27(1), 16-22.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1526924816665367>

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes and beliefs of Americans in the Southwestern United States, specifically New Mexico, in relation to organ donation. The authors focused on the demographic, cultural, and religious aspects of participants to explore predictors for organ donation registration status. 602 completed surveys for religious and ethnic factors that would influence their beliefs. The study found that ethnicity, race, religion, and education were all significant factors in one's decision to donate. Overall, non-religious participants were the most likely to donate, followed by Catholics, followers of traditional aboriginal practices, and then Hindus and Buddhists. However, the study is not a good representation of all Southwestern or even New Mexican opinions or predictors, since the study was fairly narrow, excluding certain ethnic/racial and religious representation - including Jewish and Muslim respondents. The authors concluded that with increased involvement from communities and stakeholders, such as healthcare professionals and religious leaders, campaign efforts and rates of donation would improve among the surveyed population.

Irving, M. J., Tong, A., Jan, S., Cass, A., Rose, J., Chadban, S., Allen, R. D., Craig, J. C, Wong, W., & Howard, K. (2011). Factors that influence the decision to be an organ donor: a systematic review of the qualitative literature. *Nephrology Dialysis Transplantation*, 27(6), 2526-2533. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ndt/gfr683>

Although transplantation is regarded as the treatment of choice for organ failure, there is a worldwide shortage of suitable organs. The authors conducted a systematic review of qualitative studies, specifically looking at community attitudes toward living and deceased organ donation. Medline, Embassy, PsycINFO and EconLIT were the searched databases. The literature indicated that in one's decision to become an organ donor, there are several major themes that emerge. Individuals are influenced by relational ties, personal religious beliefs, culture, family, the integrity of their bodies, and previous interactions and experiences with the health care system. Much of the existing literature reveals a general mistrust in the medical system, questions concerning the validity of brain death, knowledge about the organ donation process on an individual level, and major uncertainties about the process of donation (even amongst those that support organ donation) are also of concern. The authors concluded that there is a need for an ongoing conversation regarding organ donation. This need to better and further engage communities and minority groups in this discussion surrounding the permissibility of organ donation may be accomplished by using culturally appropriate strategies with participation from religious and cultural leaders, as well as health care professionals.

Kobus, G., Malyszko, J. S., & Małyszko, J. (2016). Do age and religion have an impact on the attitude to organ transplantation? *Transplantation Proceedings*, 48(5), 1354-1359. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.transproceed.2016.02.055>

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact that religiosity and age play in the attitudes and beliefs regarding organ donation and transplantation. 1273 people with differing religious backgrounds living in Podlaskie Voivodeship participated in a study, where they completed a survey questionnaire. Generally, organ donation and transplantation were widely accepted by participants. Overall, 96% of respondents held a positive attitude toward organ donation, regardless of their self-identified religion. Of those surveyed, 88.3% of respondents under 60 years of age and 70.5% among those over 60 years of age approved of organ donation. The study found that Baptists seemed to be more approving of organ donation and transplantation compared to other religious groups or denominations, and that Muslim respondents on average held a 25% more negative attitude toward donation. Generally, younger people were much more likely to donate and approve of living and deceased donation compared to their older counterparts – concluding that age and religiosity have an impact on attitude and willingness to donate.



Kobus, G., Piotrowska, J., Malyszko, J., Bachorzewska-Gajewska, H., & Malyszko, J. (2014). Attitudes of members of the Baptist Church toward Organ transplantation. *Transplantation Proceedings*, 46(8), 2487-2491. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.transproceed.2014.09.019>

The purpose of this study was to determine the beliefs and attitudes of Baptists in Poland regarding organ donation and transplantation, since the Baptist Church in Poland has not yet made clear its official position on organ donation, tissue or cell transplantation. The authors distributed survey questionnaires to 296 members of the Baptist Church. Findings from the questionnaire revealed that, generally, the Polish Baptists held positive attitudes toward organ donation, with 87.5% of participants agreeing that organ transplantation is right and 72% agreeing that they would have organs removed from deceased family members. However, there was not a lot of communication and discussion surrounding this topic, with only 47% of participants having talked about it with their families. Among respondents who did not support organ donation, most mentioned that their negative beliefs were because the donation or transplantation would violate the bodily integrity of the deceased donor. Many social and religious barriers must be overcome, several of which include: intentions, beliefs of the deceased, mistrust of the health care system, and religious beliefs. The authors concluded that such barriers may be easier to overcome by investing in and encouraging further and better education and to promote health services and organ donation/transplantation.

Larijani, B., Zahedi, F., & Taheri, E. (2006). Deceased and living organ donation in Iran. *American Journal of Transplantation*, 6(6), 1493-1493. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-6143.2006.01327.x>

In this letter to the editor, the authors explained several points regarding organ donation and transplantation in Iran: its permissibility, programs, and rates. Examining and referencing preexisting literature, the authors noted that both religious leaders and physicians had influenced and paved the way for progress in transplantation in Iran. They found that although religious beliefs do play a role in the rates of transplantation, they are often not the sole determinant for lack of donation or participation, rather, sociocultural beliefs and anxiety about lack of proper patient care frequently act as barriers. In their research, the authors noted that as the awareness and education concerning organ donation and transplantation increases, so does the rate of transplantation. The rate of organ transplantation increased from 0.3 per million in 2000 to 1.7 per million in 2004 – a significant increase in 4 years. This is a clear example of how with increased awareness and education, answering and addressing fears, anxieties and beliefs, the rates of organ donation will, too, increase.

Molzahn, A. E., Starzomski, R., McDonald, M., & O'Loughlin, C. (2005). Indo-Canadian beliefs regarding organ donation. *Progress in Transplantation*, 15(3), 233-239. <https://doi.org/10.1177/152692480501500306>

The authors attempted to identify and explore the values and beliefs held by Indo-Canadians regarding organ donation, specifically focusing on residents of British Columbia. Using qualitative research methods, the authors collected data by conducting individual interviews and focus groups with 40 Indo-Canadian participants pertaining to beliefs regarding organ donation. As seen in other works of literature of the same topic, the authors found that there exists a disproportionately high number of people of South Asian background awaiting transplantation in Canada, although this population is often reluctant to donate. Major themes acting as barriers to donation, that emerged in this study include: family, community, overall trust and confidence in the healthcare system, religion, values, and beliefs. There appears to be a lack of conversation about organ donation or tissue transplantation within these religious/ethnic communities. Additionally, while many feel donation is a personal and individual choice, there is an overwhelming feeling of needing approval, acceptance, and support from community and family members, in relation to the donation process. The authors concluded that beliefs and attitudes varied among participants, and that no religious doctrine or ethnic background/ membership in either of these communities proved to be definitive to their attitudes – the decision to donate was very individual for the participants of this study.

Morgan, S. E., Harrison, T. R., Affifi, W. A., Long, S. D., & Stephenson, M. T. (2008). In their own words: The reasons why people will (not) sign an organ donor card. *Health Communication, 23*(1), 23-33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410230701805158>

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors, specifically familial, that influence or prohibit people from signing organ donor cards. In this study, 78 families participated in discussions with questions pertaining to organ donation. The data from the discussions found that the vast majority of participants who supported the donation of organs, or those themselves who wanted to donate, cited the desire to help others as in line with their religious teachings and as a primary motivator for donation.

Alternatively, the most common reasons cited for not wanting to donate included: the mistrust of the healthcare system, including doctors, the organ collection system, and hospitals, and that one's organs would be donated to someone undeserving (meaning that the organ receiver had brought his or her illness upon himself/herself or was a 'bad person'). The authors concluded that religion was cited as a reason to donate and help sick and suffering people far more often than a rationale for not wanting to donate. The authors also discussed the implications and necessity of organ donor campaigns to increase public awareness and encourage donation.

Oliver, M., Ahmed, A., & Woywodt, A. (2012). Donating in good faith or getting into trouble religion and organ donation revisited. *World Journal of Transplantation, 2*(5), 69-73. <https://doi.org/10.5500/wjt.v2.i5.69>

The purpose of this study was to determine and examine the obstacles to live and deceased organ donation that contribute to the worldwide shortage of solid organs for transplantation. The authors looked at different religions, providing a brief overview of religious barriers that may come into play when dealing with organ donation and transplantation. Using pre-existing literature and data, they provided a discussion of how the transplant community, as well as society at large, may be better equipped to address these issues in the future and to overcome the chronic shortage of organ donors. The authors also aimed to examine the existing barriers that have contributed to “an ever-increasing disparity between supply and demand” (Oliver, M., et al., 2012, p. 69). The findings of this study indicated that there was a particularly high demand and low donation rate amongst ethnic minorities in the United States and in Europe. Unfortunately, ethnic minorities are often less likely to receive a well-matched organ, specifically on the deceased waiting list, and are among the lowest groups to volunteer as live donors. The authors concluded that to increase knowledge and awareness (and eventually increase rates of donation), there must be greater efforts to address religious concerns at a community level, which could be improved by increased interfaith programs and initiatives among both religious leaders and health care personnel.

Padela, A. I., & Curlin, F. A. (2013). Religion and Disparities: Considering the influences of Islam on the health of American Muslims. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 52(4), 1333-1345.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-012-9620-y>

The authors examined the relationship between religion and health disparities, specifically focusing on Islam, American Muslims, and the impact a shared religion has on the health of this racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse community in their beliefs toward organ donation. The researchers propose the measurement of religiosity to better understand disparities. Examining preexisting theory and data, the authors found that shared religion can shape the cultural construction of illness to have a substantial impact on the health outcomes of a minority population. With respect to American Muslims, there exists a God centered framework for interpretation of health and illness, and an ethico-legal framework (sharia and fatwas) to make clinical decisions. In this respect, as there is no concrete doctrine permitting or condemning the act of organ donation, it is a religiously interpreted and debated issue. As such, American Muslims relied on the fatwas issued, and although their personal religiosity and willingness to donate may vary, they were likely to rely and follow the fatwa issued by a religious leader (as this religious scholar is assumed to hold a better understanding of the concept of organ donation). The authors suggested that measures of religiosity would be beneficial, as healthcare providers and researchers would have a more complete understanding of the diversity of social and cultural factors

impacting the health outcomes of this community.

Padela, A. I., Rasheed, S., Warren, G. J., Choi, H., & Mathur, A. K. (2011). Factors associated with positive attitudes toward organ donation in Arab Americans. *Clinical Transplantation*, 25(5), 800-808.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1399-0012.2010.01382.x>

The authors of this study examined the factors that influenced Arab Americans in their decision-making process and attitudes toward organ donation. The authors noted that “the demand for transplantable organs continues to exceed supply” (Padela, A. I., et al., 2011, p. 800). With a growing population of Arab Americans in the United States, it is imperative that the beliefs and attitudes of this group is examined to determine their beliefs concerning donation. The authors of this study held face to face interviews with 1016 Arab American adults. Their findings indicated that female Christian Arab Americans were the group that was most likely to believe organ donation after death was justifiable. Generally, Muslim Arab Americans had less favorable beliefs regarding organ donation, and men more than women did not believe organ donation to be justified. Higher education levels, greater socioeconomic status, as well as greater acculturation into American society, were associated with increased levels of belief that organ donation was justified. The study concluded that to increase and encourage organ donation rates among this community of Arab Americans,

there is a need for increased education, and the need for multifaceted and culturally appropriate methods of engagement at a community level involving religious (Christian and Muslim) and health care leaders.

Padela, A., & Zaganjor, H. (2014). Relationships between Islamic religiosity and attitude toward deceased organ donation among American Muslims: A Pilot Study. *Transplantation*, 97(12), 1292-1299. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.TP.0000441874.43007.81>

The decision-making process involving organ donation is complicated and can have multiple barriers – religion being a central one for many individuals. Religious beliefs and attitudes toward organ donation must be studied to understand and try to overcome these barriers. In trying to clarify relationships between religiosity and organ donation, this study focuses on the beliefs held by Muslims in determining their levels of religiosity, sociodemographic qualities, and beliefs concerning donation. The authors recruited 97 adults from mosque communities in the United States to self-administer a questionnaire.

Sociodemographic descriptors including age, sex, and country of origin, as well as self-reported health and trust of the American health-care system were not significantly associated with attitude toward deceased organ donation. The study also found that high levels of religiosity or adherence to Islamic ethics were not necessarily associated with negative attitudes toward organ donation. There is a need for further research to be done to have

a complete and more comprehensive understanding of the barriers faced by Muslim communities in the process of organ donation.

Ralph, A. F., Alyami, A., Allen, R. D., Howard, K., Craig, J. C., Chadban, S. J., Irving, M., & Tong, A. (2016). Attitudes and beliefs about deceased organ donation in the Arabic-speaking community in Australia: A focus group study. *BMJ Open*, 6(1), 1-10. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2015-010138>

The purpose of this study was to determine the beliefs and attitudes of the Arabic speaking community in Australia in relation to deceased organ donation beliefs and attitudes. The authors conducted focus groups in which 53 Arabic speaking participants described their attitudes and beliefs in relation to organ donation. Participants were all Arabic speaking and between the ages of 19 and 77 years of age. The study included Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, and Atheists. The study found that although organ donation was often considered to be a positive 'life saving' act, many participants were unfamiliar or skeptical of the donation process. The study revealed six major themes: familial and community unity, religious belief, invisibility of organ donation, mistrust of the medical/health care system, security in the feeling that in one's decision to donate is a noble act that could save someone else, and reciprocal (or lack thereof) benefit – in that the donation of an organ is a significant gift. The authors suggested increased education

and information on organ donation, especially on a grassroots and community level to increase understanding and awareness, and ultimately improve the rates of donation.

Randhawa, G. (1998). An exploratory study examining the influence of religion on attitudes towards organ donation among the Asian population in Luton, UK. *Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation*, 13(8), 1949-1954. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ndt/13.8.1949>

The issue of unequal demand for transplantable organs continuing to exceed supply is increasing, a problem that is particularly prominent among the Asian population, who are disproportionately overrepresented on transplant lists in the United Kingdom. The author considers religion and culture as potentially preventing members of the Asian population in the UK from donating organs. Using explorative qualitative methods to consider the issues that are pertinent among issues of organ donation among this population, the author used a cross section of the Asian population in Luton. Subjects participated in group discussions and questionnaires. Most respondents did not know the position that their faith held on the subject of organ donation, and whether it was permissible or forbidden. Generally, most religious groups declared that they would require more information before making their decision, while many Sikhs outright stated they would donate after death. Of the 32 Muslim respondents, only 2 had heard the fatwa passed by the Muslim law Council in 1995,

and the majority of Muslim respondents were typically reliant on the religious prescriptions of their faith, by faith leaders, to direct their beliefs and attitudes toward organ donation. Both Sikhs and Muslims were shown to be indecisive and unwilling to donate for religious reasons. The clear majority of respondents said they would respect the wishes of a deceased relative who wished to donate their organs after death. Similar to other previously conducted studies concerning organ donation, this study found that religion played a vital role in the decision-making process, but that it was not necessarily a preventative factor, concluding that most participants wanted to have a complete understanding in order to make an informed decision related to donation.

Randhawa, G. (2012). Death and organ donation: meeting the needs of multiethnic and multifaith populations. *British Journal of Anaesthesia*, 108(11), i88-i91.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/bja/aer385>

This article sought to provide an overview of some key issues relating to death, death rituals, and faith, specifically focusing on how such variables may impact organ donation attitudes and practices. The author provided a brief overview of the beliefs held by different faiths, in relation to death, using preexisting data and literature, noting that religion was often cited as a barrier for organ donation across religions. It has been established that religion definitely influences attitudes toward organ donation, most often through the interpretation of old and sacred literature and teachings from faith leaders,

which individuals use to form their beliefs and attitudes toward organ donation. However, it is unclear whether or not those individuals have an informed view of their faith's position on organ donation. There is a need for increased education, awareness, and communication among faith leaders, policy makers, and religious adherents for a more comprehensive and educated decision making process in the understanding of a decision-making process related to organ donation and transplantation.

Rela, M., & Reddy, M. S. (2017). Living donor liver transplant (LDLT) is the way forward in Asia. *Hepatology International*, 11(2), 148-151.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12072-016-9780-z>

Living donor liver transplantation (LDLT) is the most common form of liver transplantation in Asia, to date. The authors argued that this was the result of precise social, demographic, economic and political factors in place. While deceased donor liver transplantation must be encouraged and efforts to donate must be improved, they focus on the maintenance and fostering of LDLT. While no actual qualitative study was conducted, the authors discussed the current literature and rates of living donor liver transplants in Asia. Living donor liver transplants were extremely common in Asia, with over 90% of liver transplants performed with the grafts of patients' family or close friends, compared to the Western world, where over 90% of the transplants were from deceased donors. The authors note that certain Asian countries such as Pakistan, India, Egypt, and Iran had

developed local expertise in living donor liver transplantation, given the large populations they served. Government funding, family ties and lack of infrastructure (for deceased donor liver transplantation) all attributed to the success of living donor liver transplantation in Asia.

Robinson, D. H. Z., Klammer, S. M. G., Perryman, J. P., Thompson, N. J., & Arriola, K. R. J. (2014). Understanding African American's religious beliefs and organ donation intentions. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 53(6), 1857-1872.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-014-9841-3>

The authors of this study examined the trend that African Americans were overrepresented on the organ transplant waiting list, yet they were underrepresented as organ and tissue donors. The study aimed to examine how religiosity affects their intentions or beliefs in relation to organ donation, as well as their willingness to donate. The study specifically focused on the beliefs held by African American Christians (which constituted 86% of participants). 585 people participated in the study of which 505 were identified as Christians, 5 as Buddhists, 12 as Muslims, 1 as Jewish, 25 as having religious affiliations, 19 as having no religious affiliations, and 18 did not specify. The authors examined religiosity (service attendance, religious norms, and so on) and intention to donate. Their findings suggest that although religion was a clear and strong factor in one's belief or willingness to donate, and that many Christians were supportive of organ donation, there was still a need for increased

education and interaction to overcome barriers and issues of mistrust in the healthcare system – all of which would aid in suspicion and discomfort with the idea of organ donation and transplantation, ultimately increasing one's likelihood to donate.

Rumsey, S., Hurford, D. P., & Cole, A. K. (2003). Influence of knowledge and religiousness on attitudes toward organ donation. *Transplantation Proceedings*, 35(8), 2845-2850.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.transproceed.2003.10.078>

The authors of this article examined the influence of religion on attitudes and beliefs toward organ donation. There remains a great need for organ donation, with the ratio of people awaiting transplants far exceeding the number of readily available organs for transplantation - leaving thousands of people awaiting a transplant annually. The Organ Donation Attitude Survey (ODAS) was developed by the researchers to assess attitudes regarding organ donation. 190 undergraduate students participated in this study, of which 114 participants were female, and 76 participants were male. The results indicated that education regarding organ donation, knowledge, and exposure to someone who has previously donated after death or had been a recipient, as well as religious beliefs, were all major variables on one's attitudes and willingness to donate. The authors highlighted the impact of four variables: 1) education regarding organ donation, 2) knowledge of someone who had donated an organ after death, 3) awareness of anyone who received a donated organ,

and 4) religious beliefs, as being central factors in the decision-making process. As a variable, religion often determined and impacted an individual's willingness to donate, with individuals more likely to donate if they felt they had the support from their religious community or religious leader. This finding highlights the influence and power religious leaders hold in influencing attitudes and decisions to donate, which is why there must be an increase in communication and education concerning this topic for increased levels of donation.

Saleem, T., Ishaque, S., Habib, N., Hussain, S. S., Jawed, A., Khan, A. A., Ahmad, M, I., Iftikhar, M. O., Mughal, H. P., & Jehan, I. (2009). Knowledge, attitudes and practices survey on organ donation among a selected adult population of Pakistan. *BMC Medical Ethics*, 10(5), 1-12.  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6939-10-5>

This study looked at the attitudes, beliefs, practices and knowledge of a selected adult population in Karachi, Pakistan, in relation to organ donation. Using convenience sampling, the authors held 408 interviews in which participants completed and participated in face-to-face interviews and questionnaires. Findings from the study indicated that knowledge concerning organ donation was largely associated with education and socioeconomic status. 35.5% of people interviewed expressed a high motivation to donate, although only 3.5% of people interviewed were actual donors. Television was the primary source of information regarding organ donation for most participants. The overall findings of the

study indicate that there is a need for increased education regarding organ donations for it to translate into increased rates of donation; there is a greater need for relevant information that should come from both religious and medical scholars/practitioners, as well as outside media.

Sanner, M. (1994). Attitudes toward organ donation and transplantation: A model for understanding reactions to medical procedures after death. *Social Science & Medicine*, 38(8), 1141-1152.  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536\(94\)90229-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(94)90229-1)

In this study, the author sought to understand factors that influence the beliefs and attitudes regarding organ donation and other procedures with the body after death. The study focused on a population in Uppsala, a small city in Sweden, where 38 participants completed interviews. Responses were analyzed using a psychodynamic defense theory. The authors found that in the statements, 20 categories emerged, 17 of which were generally negative attitudes toward organ donation, and only 3 that promoted the procedure. The author noted that there was much anxiety surrounding death and procedures after death, and many of the anxieties included: distrust and fear, value of the individual, respecting God's work (the human body is a creation of God and should be left untouched/unchanged), altruism, and rationality. The author suggested further research into this subject, particularly the relationship with age and level of education



to gain a better understanding of barriers faced by individuals when forming their beliefs and attitudes toward organ donation.

Sharif, A., Jawad, H., Nightingale, P., Hodson, J., Lipkin, G., Cockwell, P., Ball, S., & Borrows, R. (2011). A quantitative survey of Western Muslim attitudes to solid organ donation. *Transplantation*, 92(10), 1108-1114.

<https://doi.org/10.1097/TP.0b013e318231ea17>

The purpose of this article was to examine Western Muslim attitudes toward organ donation, as this group is often considered reluctant donors. 891 individuals voluntarily completed an anonymous survey, which was made available both online and via paper sampling. Among those surveyed, a total of 68.5% of Western Muslims agreed with the concept of organ donation, with 39.3% of respondents believing it was compatible with Islam, and only 12.7% being registered donors. In terms of willingness to donate, 1.9% would refuse an organ transplant if required, 72.4% would agree to receive if required, and 25.7% being undecided. The constraints and self-perceived barriers to donation were cited as interpretation of religious scripture, by 76.5% of respondents, and contradictory advice from local mosque was cited by 70.2% of respondents. The findings from this study indicated that predictors for organ donation approval among all global Muslims included a younger age, lesser degree of self-rated religiosity, awareness of organ shortages, higher education, and knowing someone with kidney disease/dialysis. As shown in the data obtained from this study, there was

a large disparity between those willing to donate their organs and those willing to receive a transplanted or donated organ. For an increase in donations from this reluctant group, there must be increased awareness and discussion, as well as targeted initiatives concerning organ donation and transplantation.

Stephenson, M. T., Morgan, S. E., Roberts-Perez, S. D., Harrison, T., Afifi, W., & Long, S. D. (2008). The role of religiosity, religious norms, subjective norms, and bodily integrity in signing an organ donor card. *Health Communication*, 23(5), 436-447.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10410230802342119>

This study focused on factors including: religiosity, religious norms, subjective norms and bodily integrity, and the ways these variables affected and influenced attitudes toward organ donation. The authors recruited 4426 participants from 6 differing universities to complete a survey examining attitudes of the body and its integrity. The study found that religiosity and religious norms did not negatively impact participants' willingness to donate, but rather had a "nonsignificant effect" (Stephenson, M. T., et al., 2008, p. 436) on their beliefs and attitudes toward organ donation. This finding differs from the evidence found in past literature that suggests there is often a decreased likelihood for individuals who self-identify as religious to become organ donors. The results of this study are useful for organ donation campaigns, in that the findings illustrate religious factors that are often thought of as being barriers to one's ability

to donate are perhaps less significant, and that religion is not necessarily a barrier to organ donation.

Wakefield, C. E., Reid, J., & Homewood, J. (2011). Religious and ethnic influences on willingness to donate organs and donor behavior: an Australian perspective. *Progress in Transplantation*, 21(2), 161-168.  
[DOI: 10.7182/prtr.21.2.2071rgn834573152](https://doi.org/10.7182/prtr.21.2.2071rgn834573152)

The study aimed to examine the attitudes and beliefs of Australians regarding organ donation, specifically focusing on how their religious or ethnic backgrounds may affect their beliefs. To determine whether donation attitudes would differ across various ethnic or religious denominations in Australia, the authors recruited 509 Australians to participate in their study. All participants were between the ages of 18 and 81, the vast majority of them being students or friends and family members (of those selected students). Factors such as religiosity, sex, and age all influenced attitudes and beliefs toward organ donation. The findings revealed that women were generally more likely to donate, compared to men, and generally viewed organ donation in a more positive manner than did men. Additionally, younger respondents were generally more likely to donate and view it as an overall positive act, compared to older respondents. The Christian respondents were found to have a significantly higher knowledge and more favorable attitude compared to Buddhist or Muslim respondents and were also found to be more likely to donate. The

authors concluded that although their work reflected and complemented the existing literature, there is still work to be done to increase knowledge and rates of donation – specifically work that centers around culture and religion in multiethnic and multicultural societies in a culturally competent way.

Wakefield, C. E., Watts, K. J., Homewood, J., Meiser, B., & Siminoff, L. A. (2010). Attitudes toward organ donation and donor behavior: a review of the international literature. *Progress in Transplantation*, 20(4), 380-391.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/152692481102100213>

The focus of this article was to study the existing international literature and research that had been done that looked at the attitudes toward deceased organ donation, willingness to donate, and donor behavior. The authors examined members of the general public - excluding transplant recipients, donor families, and health care professionals. The authors chose 33 studies to focus on, and their results found that variables such as: age (younger), gender (females), education levels (higher), socioeconomic status (higher), fewer religious beliefs, familiar with people with positive attitudes, more altruistic, unconcerned with manipulation of the body of a deceased donor, attributed to a more positive attitude towards organ donation. Individuals possessing the qualities mentioned above or holding those beliefs were found to be more likely to donate. The review examined the complexity and intricacy of individuals' attitudes toward donation. The author found that more

research should be conducted, specifically analyzing broader factors that influence donation, such as social norms and legislations, as well as attitudes and beliefs that have the potential to act as barriers in the donation process.

### **Expert Opinion**

Al-Mousawi, M., Hamed, T., & Al-Matouk, H. (1997). Views of Muslim scholars on organ donation and brain death. *Transplantation Proceedings*, 29(8), 3217. DOI: [10.1016/s0041-1345\(97\)00876-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0041-1345(97)00876-2)

With religion being one of the biggest influencing factors in relation to organ donation, this study strictly focused on obtaining the views of senior Muslim scholars on the issue and examining their direct influence on individuals' beliefs and decisions toward organ donation. A questionnaire was given to 50 senior Muslim scholars in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt, Lebanon, and Oman. Questions concerning the permissibility of organ donation during life and after death, brain death, and the buying/selling of organs were central in the questionnaire. 90.6% of the scholars allowed organ donation during lifetime, so long as it did not significantly harm the donor, believing that the recipient would greatly benefit. 87.5% allowed organ donation after death, although they maintained that it was absolutely necessary to obtain the consent of the deceased during his or her life, or the consent of his or her close family members. 90.6% initially rejected brain death as being considered death, and condoned the removal of life

support (with the exception of another patient, with a better prognosis, urgently needing the life support machine). 7 of 9 scholars who were directly approached and further explained the concept of brain death, changed their view and accepted it as legitimate means of death. The authors concluded that among the Muslim scholars consulted, live and deceased organ donation was accepted, but the concept of brain death was hindering the effectiveness of transplantation programs in Muslim countries because it was not yet well understood or discussed.

Ghaly, M. (2012). Religio-ethical discussions on organ donation among Muslims in Europe: An example of transnational Islamic bioethics. *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*, 15(2), 207-220. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11019-011-9352-x>

This article focused on the discussions by Muslim religious scholars in the UK and the Netherlands concerning organ donation. The author focused on three fatwas relevant to organ donation: the European Council for Fatwa and Research (in the year 2000), the Muslim Law (Sharia) Council (in the year 1995), and Moroccan religious scholar Mustafa Ben Hamza's fatwa in the year 2006. The findings revealed that the three fatwas examined showed that many Muslim religious scholars permitted organ donation to Muslims and non-Muslims. The article discussed the transnationalism of Islamic bioethics and how many Muslims living in the western world turn to fatwas imported

from the Muslim world. This was problematic because it revealed that there was a lack of information and education among community and grassroots levels of religious communities (among adherents and their imams, sheiks, and so on) and so individuals primarily rely on information coming from the Muslim world. This is also problematic in that there are contradicting fatwas (although the three specific fatwas examined in this article, all agreed that both life and cadaveric organ donations were permitted) and the issue of the religious permissibility of organ donation is, to this day, controversial and debatable. When organ donation is discussed and debated, it is important for social, cultural, and political factors to be considered, along with religion.

Goodarzi, P., Aghayan, H. R., Larijani, B., Rafiee, A. B., Falahzadeh, K., Sahebjam, M., Ghaderi, F., & Arjmand, B. (2015). Tissue and organ donation and transplantation in Iran. *Cell and Tissue Banking, 16*(2), 295-301.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10561-014-9473-6>

This article provided an overview of the organ transplantation program established in Iran. The article stressed the importance of religious scholar's opinion and position in the development of such a program. It is a strong Muslim belief that the preservation of human life is incredibly valuable, and in Iran (a predominately Muslim country), rates of organ and tissue donation and transplantation were low before the development of this program - which was based on religious scholars' permission. The

authors provided a brief overview of the organ transplantation program in Iran, as well as religious aspects and public attitudes using preexisting data and literature. The support from the religious leaders and healthcare professionals in Iran had helped in the changing attitudes of the Iranian people to become more easily accepting of organ donation, as well as aiding in the development and maintenance of the organ transplantation program.

Güden, E., Çetinkaya, F., & Naçar, M. (2013). Attitudes and behaviors regarding organ donation: A study on officials of religion in Turkey. *Journal of Religion and Health, 52*(2), 439-449.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-011-9490-8>

The authors of this study aimed to explore the attitudes of religious scholars and the position they maintained regarding organ donation and transplantation. A 30-question questionnaire was distributed to 540 officials. All interviewees were officials of the Department of Religious Affairs in Kayseri, Turkey. Of those surveyed, 90.8% of participants noted the importance of organ donation, with 57.9% having considered donation and only 1.1% having actually donated. In this study, men were found to be more likely to donate than women. Imams and preachers were also found to be likely donors. The faith leaders revealed that only 30.1% of them had discussed organ donation and transplantation with religious followers or others, and that only 3% stated their preaching influenced or convinced someone to proceed with the

organ donation process and to donate their organ(s). Although attitude toward organ donation and transplantation was positive among religious officials, there was still very little discussion or opportunity for them to motivate and inform other followers or adherents, which ultimately limited awareness, understanding, and rates of donation.

Martinelli, A. M. (1993) Organ donation: Barriers, religious aspects. *AORN Journal*, 58(2), 236-252.  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0001-2092\(07\)65228-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0001-2092(07)65228-4)

Exploring the barriers individuals may face when becoming organ donors, the author in this article addressed such issues from a nurse's perspective. The author explored the methods of communication which were essential for successful organ procurement. Similar to existing literature and data concerning organ donation, the article underscores the importance of increased awareness among health care providers for better organ procurement. The author maintained that with the development and implementation of public and professional education programs, barriers can be broken. Both the families and professionals, including medical professionals, administrative staff, and other individuals or groups involved in the process, should all be well informed on the topic of organ donation and transplantation to ensure its success and expansion.

Messina, E. (2015). Beyond the officially sacred, donor and believer: Religion and

organ transplantation. *Transplantation Proceedings*, 47(7), 2092-2096.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.transproceed.2015.06.031>

The purpose of this study was to examine the positions and beliefs held by different religions in relation to organ donation and transplantation, specifically in Piedmont, Italy. The author focused on the positions held by the Roman Catholic Church, Orthodox Church, Protestant Churches, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Scientology, and Jehovah's Witnesses. Using evidence from existing literature, the author provided a brief overview of the beliefs held by the different faith groups. When discussing the Islamic position, the author noted that Muslim burial customs generally have the deceased buried within 24 hours of their death, which could interfere with the processes of transplantation procedures. The author emphasized on the need for religious factors (specifically when discussing organ donation) to be understood through a broader narrative. There are many factors that influence a person's decision to donate, including age, socioeconomic status, level of education culture, and so on. Religion cannot simply be labelled as a barrier to organ donation or transplantation when no religion formally forbids it.

Oliver, M., Woywodt, A., Ahmed, A., & Saif, I. (2010). Organ donation, transplantation and religion. *Nephrology Dialysis Transplantation* 26(2), 437-444.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/ndt/gfq628>

The authors examined religious concerns in relation to organ donation, particularly live donation, aiming to provide a better understanding of religious concerns for healthcare professionals. The authors collected data and examined existing literature, producing a general overview of differing religious beliefs concerning transplantation and organ donation. Knowledge of these facts may provide a more thorough background to address these issues and concerns professionally and appropriately, as well as to increase transplant numbers. The findings of this article revealed that the majority of religions did not explicitly state whether organ donation was permitted or forbidden. There were ongoing debates regarding this subject in which many scholars believed that it was permissible, often regarded as a selfless act, to save another; other scholars argued that the body must remain whole (as God has created it). Generally, within the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) there is an ongoing discussion of purity and wholeness. In eastern religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism, where reincarnation is a central doctrine, organ donation is not necessarily seen as negatively affecting one's soul's transition to another life. The article briefly discussed designated donation, where donors and recipients are of the same religious background, and how while it may encourage some specific groups to donate, it also has the potential to alienate specific groups, further increasing the gap between available organs for transplantation and number of individuals in need/awaiting transplant.

Randhawa, G., & Neuberger, J. (2016). Role of religion in organ donation—Development of the United Kingdom Faith and Organ Donation Action Plan. *Transplantation Proceedings*, 48(3), 689-694.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.transproceed.2015.10.074>

This article explored the ongoing challenge in the shortage of organs for transplant. The authors stressed that there need to be better public engagement and increased discussion about organ donation. There was also a growing initiative to address how religion played a critical role in the decision to donate. For this reason, there must be discussion and collaboration between faith leaders and health care professionals to better address this health issue and develop an action plan. The authors examined the themes arising from the Faith and Organ Donation Summit, where prominent faith leaders gathered to discuss ways to engage with and encourage organ donation within their communities. Faith leaders participated in a Faith and Organ Donation Summit, to discuss and learn from each other the different ways to engage and encourage organ donation, as well as debate positions held around it. Conclusions from the summit included the need for a more general engagement, the need for increased engagement at a local level, debates concerning donation should include people of all levels, and the need for increased resources. The faith leaders concluded that there was much work to be done in relation to organ donation and transplantation within their differing religious communities. Suggestions to increase overall discussion and awareness was stressed, as well as the

more local or 'grassroots' engagement. There is also the opportunity to work with health professionals and health care workers in a joint effort to increase awareness and donation.

Randhawa, G., Brocklehurst, A., Pateman, R., Kinsella, S., & Parry, V. (2010). Religion and Organ Donation: The views of UK faith leaders. *Journal of Religion and Health, 51*(3), 743-751.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-010-9374-3>

This article presented the findings from a gathering in which the Organ Donation Taskforce commissioned face to face interviews with faith leaders to better understand the position they took toward organ donation as a means of overcoming barriers. Face to face interviews with faith leaders and organizations within the United Kingdom were conducted. Prior to the interviews, many faith leaders had little or no opportunity to engage in conversations about organ donation. Findings revealed that no faith or faith leaders explicitly condemned or denounced organ donation in principle, in fact, it was the majority opinion of various faith leaders that organ donation is permitted and with some encouraging and actively supporting this act. Leaders of all faiths maintained that there was a greater need for grassroots level work to be done within communities to engage in this conversation and topic, to promote and encourage donation. It is extremely important that faith leaders, medical professionals, and policy makers all understand the positions each other hold, and for continued communication and

increased involvement amongst faith groups, leaders, policy makers, and health care professionals.

Rasheed, S. A., & Padela, A. I. (2013). The interplay between religious leaders and organ donation among Muslims. *Zygon, 48*(3), 635-654.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/zygo.12040>

The authors examined the relationship between Islam and health by analyzing jurisconsults and verdicts. The article focused on the promotion of health behavior changes – specifically interventions and promotion of organ donation. The authors used the lens of the theory of planned behavior, and examined two distinct scholarly imperatives of Muslim religious leaders. There was the need for more 'on the ground' work from local Imams and other religious leaders. There seemed to be a lot of confusion concerning the permissibility of organ donations and/or transplantations, and a lack of conversation and education surrounding this topic. For tangible change and interventions to be successful, there must be open and intersectional conversations involving faith leaders and members of the health care system.

Setta, S. M., & Shemie, S. D. (2015). An explanation and analysis of how world religions formulate their ethical decisions on withdrawing treatment and determining death. *Philosophy, Ethics, and Humanities in Medicine, 10*(6), 1-22.  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13010-015-0025-x>

This article sought to provide an overview of definitions related to death and how different religions label death and determine end of life decisions and beliefs on organ donation and tissue transplantation after death. The authors used preexisting data and literature to examine the beliefs of Bön, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Indigenous Traditions, Islam, Judaism, Shinto, and Taoism. The authors aimed to increase cultural competency in healthcare practitioners by providing them with more background information on the religious beliefs of their patients. All religions hold life as sacred, but there are differences in their beliefs toward end of life support and organ donation transplantation. Differences in Western religion, based in Judaism, compared to Eastern religions, view the process of human life differently, with Western religions typically seeing the human as a singular creation and in a linear fashion, unlike some Eastern religions that see the human life as cyclical. It is important for healthcare professionals to understand these beliefs in order to provide religious and culturally appropriate care.

Shaheen, F. A. M., & Souqiyyeh, M. Z. (2004). Increasing organ donation rates from Muslim donors: Lessons from a successful model. *Transplantation Proceedings*, 36(7), 1878-1880.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.transproceed.2004.08.090>

Over the last several years, many researchers have taken an interest in the Islamic views about organ donation and transplantation. This study focused on the major strategies to reach the goals of the organ procurement

centers adopted by the Saudi Center of organ transplantation (SCOT). It examined the rates of organ transplantation in Saudi Arabia including: kidney, liver, heart, cornea, lung, and pancreas. While this program had been successful, the authors note that there are still several barriers that limited the full benefit/potential of cadaver donors. The authors noted that there were limited health services available, such as inadequate numbers of intensive care units, emergency rooms, limited staff, and limited or insufficient maintenance. Additionally, the concept of brain death was not recognized by all staff, which also acted as an obstacle. Increasing awareness in the medical community as well as among the public at large on the importance of organ donation and transplantation and developing an efficient coordinated system between the donating hospitals and the transplant centers were essential to improving rates of donation and increasing public knowledge concerning organ donation and transplantation.

Tarhan, M., Dalar, L., Yildirimoglu, H., Sayar, A., & Altin, S. (2015). The view of religious officials on organ donation and transplantation in the Zeytinburnu District of Istanbul. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 54(6), 1975-1985.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-014-9851-1>

The purpose of this study was to examine the viewpoints held by religious officials, in the Zeytinburnu District Mufti, Istanbul, in relation to organ donation and transplantation, particularly because their viewpoints and attitudes were extremely



influential within their communities. Data was collected from 40 religious officials, including imams and muezzins, who completed a 27-question survey consisting of open ended and closed questions regarding organ donation. Of the participants, 22.5% of the religious officials felt they held adequate information on the subject of organ donation and transplantation, while 52.5% felt they held partially adequate information, and 25% felt they held inadequate information concerning the topic. Only 52.5% said they had received additional information in more formal ways (such as seminars and conferences), with the majority stating they had received information via publications, television, and radio, and 10% stating they had not received any information on organ donation or transplantation. Among the participants, 5% were actual organ donors, 80% were considering becoming a donor, and 15% stated they had not, and would not, be interested in donating. 92.5% of respondents stated that Islam looked very favorably on organ donation. Most participants (85%) stated that there was a need for increased awareness on the subject, suggesting public speeches, sermons, increased education in schooling, and joint effort and collaboration between religious officials and healthcare professionals to increase awareness and rates of organ donation.

Türkyilmaz, S., Topbaş, M., Ulusoy, S., Kalyoncu, M., Kiliç, E., & Çan, G. (2013). Attitudes and behavior regarding organ donation and transplantation on the part of religious officials in the eastern black sea region of Turkey. *Transplantation Proceedings*, 45(3), 864-868.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.transproceed.2013.02.095>

The study, conducted between December 2008 and November 2009, aimed to seek the opinions and attitudes of religious officials in the Eastern Black Sea region of Turkey, in relation to organ donation and transplantation. 550 Muslim religious officials, including 541 males and 9 females, completed a supervised questionnaire. Questions covered topics on volunteering to donate, their likelihood to donate, and their thoughts on the subject should they need an organ transplantation. There were also questions on the permissibility of organ donation. The findings of this study showed that 4 men (0.7%) among those interviewed had previously volunteered to be organ donors. Additionally, after attending seminars on the subject matter with other muftis and religious personnel, 32 (5.9%) decided to become voluntary donors. Reasons cited for not volunteering to donate included lack of knowledge on the subject matter and processes involved with the transplant. Among those interviewed, 305 (55.5%) officials stated that in the event of the death of a relative, they would choose to not donate that persons organs; although a substantial portion of the study group (46%) indicated that in the event they themselves needed an organ transplant, they would agree to receive the transplant. In terms of religious permissibility, 83.3% of religious

officials confirmed that Islam permitted organ donation and transplantation, 13.6% confirmed that Christianity permits this, and other religions (including Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism) all had figures under 10% related to permissibility. The study further showed that although religious views did impact the decision to be or not be a donor, further education and collaborative efforts between religious officials can be increasingly beneficial.

Uskun, E., & Ozturk, M. (2012). Attitudes of Islamic religious officials toward organ transplantation and donation. *Clinical Transplantation*, 27, E37–E41.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/ctr.12058>

The decision to donate one's organs – be it a live donation or a donation after one is deceased, is a big decision, one in which religious leaders often play a big role in shaping an individual's attitudes and beliefs regarding donation. This article focused on the attitudes of Islamic religious leaders in Turkey in relation to organ donation and transplantation. A questionnaire was distributed to 165 religious people. It included questions about sociodemographic characteristics, behaviors, and attitudes toward organ donation. Findings showed that among those who participated, 71.5% of respondents believed organ donation was compatible with Islamic beliefs, with 51.1% willing to themselves donate. Among those interviewed, 57.6% had been approached for advice or opinions on the topic, and 32.7% admitted they did not feel adequately prepared with proper information to answer

the questions relating to donation or transplantation. The study revealed that religious leaders were often consulted for advice on donation but were not properly equipped with the education for both the medical and religious dimensions. It was suggested that in-service training be provided to Islamic religious officials, to increase their medical and religious education regarding organ donation and transplantation. The authors concluded that increased education for both religious leaders and the general public was needed to ultimately increase overall awareness and involvement concerning organ donation and transplantation.

Van Den Branden, S., & Broeckaert, B. (2011). The ongoing charity of organ donation. Contemporary English Sunni fatwas on organ donation and blood transfusion. *Bioethics*, 25(3), 167-175.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8519.2009.01782.x>

Beliefs toward organ donation and blood transfusion were often met with barriers – one such barrier being religion. Many studies had shown the importance that Muslim counsellors played in the decision-making process of donation and transfusion. For this reason, the authors examined English Sunni e-fatwas to better understand the contemporary Islamic views regarding organ donation and blood transfusion. The authors completed an in-depth analysis of 70 English Sunni e-fatwas to obtain a more concrete understanding of key concepts in the Islamic ethical framework regarding organ donation and blood transfusion. Muslim counsellors played a significant role

in the decision-making process regarding organ donation and blood transfusion. In all of the 70 fatwas studied, organ donation and blood transfusion were allowed, from both living and deceased donors. Auto transplantation was deemed permissible, only if done for medical purposes. Cases of xenotransplantation were less frequently mentioned but could be allowed in case of necessity. Generally, organ donation was seen as an ongoing form of charity or *zakat* - one of the 5 pillars of Islam. There was a lack of discussion regarding the definition of death, with brain death often debated as a legitimate form of death in the English Sunni fatwas. This research was complementary to the pre-existing literature on this subject.

Życiński, J. M. (1996). Bioethical issues from a Roman Catholic perspective. *Nephrology Dialysis Transplantation*, 11(6), 966-968.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/ndt/11.6.966>

This article provided a brief overview of Christian belief with regard to death and organ donation. Christianity views organ donation favorably by being promoted by the pope John Paul II, in which he referred to donation as an act of Christian love. The article explored the social and economic issues that sometimes accompany organ donation, but the author stressed that from a Christian personalist view, respect for human life was as simple as being human. By this statement, he meant that the solidarity between people and one's dignity was not measurable in economic terms. The author maintained that increased awareness,

education, and communication must be established between medical/health care practitioners, religious leaders and theologians, as well as philosophers for a better understanding of the implications of donation (related to age for example), and increased donation.

### **Conclusion**

Our review of the articles examining the relationship between religion and organ donation, specifically focusing on the beliefs and attitudes of the public versus opinions held by religious experts, reveals the multiple barriers faced by individuals when deciding whether or not to donate their organs. Religion was often cited as a barrier in their decision-making process, although as seen in our annotated bibliography, there was no consensus on the permissibility of organ donation in Islam or Christianity, as was the case in various religions. With the lack of clear religious guidance, there is room for interpretation in which we see religious scholars having two different sets of beliefs and attitudes toward donation/transplantation: 1) organ donation and transplantation is a charitable act of love and kindness, or 2) God created the human body to be whole and thus any modifications or removal of organs is wrong and will leave people in an incomplete form in the afterlife. Our annotated bibliography found that many faith leaders (Muslim and Christian) supported and encouraged organ donation, confirming that it was compatible with their faiths.

Although there had been fatwas issued in support of organ donation and transplantation, many members of the public who were studied cited obstacles in relation to their decision to donate, some of which revolved around religious and cultural practices and beliefs and the permissibility of this act in their faith. Other barriers included: fear and mistrust of the medical or health care systems, controversy surrounding criteria and death determination (e.g., brain death), lack of information, and commitment to one's family, culture, or religious ideals and beliefs.

Among the selected articles, many authors highlighted the important role that faith leaders or experts played in shaping public opinion and belief concerning organ donation and transplantation. Unfortunately, there was a lack of 'on the ground' work between faith leaders, experts, and the public in relation to donation and its religious permissibility. Our findings suggest increasing education, knowledge, and open communication among faith leaders, medical personnel, and the general public in relation to organ donation by: 1) reeducating or further educating faith leaders, 2) media campaigns that address barriers in Muslim or other religious communities, and 3) culturally and religiously appropriate care and targeted campaigning toward these minority groups to ultimately educate and increase rates of donation. Additionally, more research should be carried out focusing on the Muslim faith in relation to organ donation to understand the beliefs of this group and their actions in the future.

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