

### **Voluntary Body Donation - A Survey of Awareness**

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#### **Abstract**

**Background:** Cadaver is a very important teaching tool in anatomy not only for development of basic knowledge but also for development of psychomotor skill by dissection. Voluntary body donation is the major source of cadaver in India now.

**Methods:** The present study is questionnaire based, KAP (Knowledge, attitude & practice) study, carried among 500 people in the age group of 25- 60 yrs.

**Results:** 80% study members knew the term body donation. Merely 26 % of them were aware that body donation is one of the method of dead body disposal & 74% mentioned about the traditional methods only. Only 3% of study members knew the correct time limit to donate the body.

**Conclusions:** Body donation is a generous and unselfish act for those who wish to be useful to living, even after death. There is need for creating awareness about 'Voluntary Body Donation' among general population.

**Keywords:** Body donation, Dissection, General population.

#### **Introduction**

Study of anatomy is very important in medical profession and availability of cadaver plays very crucial role in teaching to develop basic knowledge and perception of anatomy. Though imaging techniques and simulations

including computerised simulations of the body are also available but they have their own advantages and disadvantages.<sup>1</sup> So, cadaver study is playing its pivotal role in Anatomy teaching despite of existence of many alternatives.<sup>2</sup> There is shortage of cadaver supply in different Medical institutes of India. Moreover, the condition is becoming worse with gradually increasing number of medical colleges.<sup>3</sup> The importance of dissection on human cadavers for learning anatomy is well emphasized. The psycho-visuo-tactile experience of cadaver dissection is an unparalleled means to understand and retain the knowledge of human anatomy. Beside dissection, cadavers are also used for practicing as well as developing new surgical techniques. It also provides surgeons a simulating environment to polish their surgical skills. Neither books nor can computers replace body dissection in learning anatomy.<sup>2</sup>

In our country, such willed body donation programs are still in their infancy. The success of these programs depends on the ability of our health care professionals in motivating the people.<sup>4</sup> But, how much the healthcare professionals themselves are aware about body donation? Leave health care professionals, are the medical teachers aware? This question prompted us to undertake this survey with the aim to assess the knowledge, attitude and practices regarding 'Body Donation'.

## Material & Methods

**Study design:** Questionnaire based, KAP (Knowledge, attitude& practice) study

**Study population:** General population in the age group of 25- 60 yrs.

**Sample size:** 500 peoples either male or feamle

**Sampling Method:** Purposive sampling

**Inclusion Criteria :** Pepole with 25-60 yrs age group and who were willing to participate in this study

**Exclusion Criteria:** People not willing to participate.

## Data Collection

The present study is questionnaire based, KAP (Knowledge, attitude& practice) study, carried among 500 people in the age group of 25- 60 yrs. The teaching staff members of anatomy department were excluded. A structured questionnaire was administered after due consent by the people. The data was analyzed and percentages were calculated and represented graphically.

## Results

80.00% study members knew the term body donation. Merely 26 % of them were aware that body donation is one of the method of dead body disposal & 74% mentioned about the traditional methods only. Only 3% of study members knew the correct time limit to donate the body. Majority (97%) of study members were unaware about the process of body donation. Only 3 % of study members were aware about the procedure of body donation and only 1% knew the Act which governs the body donation. 3 % knew that the death certificate is mandatory during body donation process.

Table 1: Documents required at the time of body donation

1 -Death Certificate -	3%
2 -Body donation form duly filled	1%

Table 2: Office bearers of body donation committee

1 Dean	3%
2 Professor & Head of anatomy Department	2%
3 Social Worker	5%

Only 3 % knew about the office bearers of body donation.

Table 3: Use of Donated Body

1 To learn anatomy by Dissection	6%
2 Anatomical Research	9%

It was observed that, 6 % of study members had clear Idea about the uses of donated body, 9% had incomplete idea.

## Discussion

Anatomy i.e. the study of structure of human body is the basic yet one of the most important subjects studied by medical students. Cadaveric dissection has always been integral to studying anatomy. Though body donation is the preferred and major source for cadavers, the proportion of general population willing to donate body is meagre leading to scarcity of cadavers which affects anatomy teaching programs negatively.<sup>5-7</sup>

To make up one's mind for body donation after death, even for the purpose of medical education is an extremely difficult decision across cultures. People often are reluctant to talk about death as they tend to believe that discussion about death may lead it to come soon.<sup>8</sup> The most important reason for denial to 'body donation' in Indians is lack of awareness.

Though mass media is an effective way of communicating the message of body donation. The importance of mass media in propagating the message positively among the population cannot be neglected.<sup>5</sup>

The results of our study suggest that educating the general population and are in congruence with Saritha et al.<sup>3</sup> Donation of body in the interest of medical education and research can always be considered as one's final gift which lasts for the next generations.

### **Conclusions**

Body donation is a generous and unselfish act for those who wish to be useful to living, even after death. There is need for creating awareness about 'Voluntary Body Donation' among general population.

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