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Guest Editorial

Organ donation must be part of under graduate curriculum in medical education

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Organ transplant surgeries have revolutionized the treatment of end stage organ failure. However, a huge gap in supply and demand of donor organ is a big global challenge. More than 90% of the organ failure patients in the world die while waiting for the donor organ. Although Spain, Croatia and USA have high rate of deceased organ donation per million population yet there is inability to cope with transplantation need of patients.¹ The situation is even more dismal in India where more than one lakh people suffer from organ failure every year and pan -India deceased organ donation rate is 0.34 per million population which is the lowest in the world.² Lack of education programmes on organ donation and transplantation has been pointed out as one of the main reasons for organ shortage. Medical students and residents also possess limited knowledge about organ donation hence causing hinderance in donor conversion which might be attributed to the way of training.^{3,4} A brief intervention can significantly increase perceived knowledge of organ donation and positively influence attitude to organ donation among medical students.⁵

Due to grim situation of organ donation, the countries around the world have been conducting research and have observed that increase in awareness leads to more

positive attitude towards organ donation and strong willingness to donate. Countries with high rate of organ donation such as Spain, Croatia and United States implemented organ donation education almost 20 years ago by providing relevant curriculum and rich educational resources. Spain has developed a national curriculum for donor coordinators, intensive and emergency care professionals in the framework of training activities organized and funded by the Spanish government.⁶ Though Croatia has a legal regulation for cadaveric donation based on a presumed consent, but increase in organ donation and transplantation rates was primarily achieved by appointing an in-house transplant coordinator/key donation person in each hospital. Transplant coordinators are well experienced and highly skilled intensivists who are additionally trained in organ donation management for internationally recognized and licensed training courses for transplant coordinators (eg, Transplant Procurement Management Course). This has resulted in an improved detection and management of potential donors.⁶ That means in addition to educational curriculum, skilled coordinators and specialists facilitate smooth implementation of organ donation programmes in these countries. China is also starting with professional education on organ donation for medical undergraduates and has developed a relevant curriculum based on theory

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of planned behaviour.⁷

However, in our country educational content for organ donation is not specific even in undergraduate medical teaching programme despite reformed curriculum which was implemented in 2019.⁸ Medical education specifically can have an important effect on shaping attitudes toward organ donation.⁹ Knowledgeable medical students can pass on the information and discuss the topics with their families, friends and community resulting in a positive attitude in general public for organ donation and on joining clinical practice they can identify, motivate and guide family members of potential donors in better ways. To increase the number of potential organ donors, an intensified evaluation is needed for structured education, assessment of training deficits, and performance. Indian Medical Graduate can play a vital role in supporting and promoting organ donation programme in our country provided a crisp curriculum content is developed and included in medical education. A module can be designed with components including overview, social concepts, ethics, laws & regulations and medical knowledge regarding organ donation.⁷ This module can be included across all phases of under graduate training programme in medical education just like AETCOM module. This curriculum should be supplemented from time to time with various certified courses or workshops to enhance knowledge and skill.

1. Conflict of Interest

None.


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