

# Medical Journal *of* Dr.DY Patil Vidyapeeth

(Deemed to be University)

Official Publication of Dr. DY Patil Vidyapeeth Society, Pune

Volume 14 / Issue 4 / July-August 2021

[www.mjdrdypv.org](http://www.mjdrdypv.org)

# Organ Shortage: Can Educating the Medical Students be the Key?

Shortage of organs for transplant is a challenge faced all over the world. The medical care professionals acting as a bridge between the potential donors and the recipients educate the general public about organ donation, encouraging them to register for it. They also have the ability to recognize a potential donor, counsel the donor and their family to donate organs and thus they have a crucial contribution to solving the problem of organ shortage.<sup>[1]</sup>

Research into the knowledge and attitude of medical students toward organ donation has revealed that while they have a positive attitude toward organ donation, their level of knowledge regarding the types of donors, concept of brain death, laws governing the activity, and the related ethical issues is very poor and that medical students do not possess the knowledge about organ donation that is sufficient to maximize procurement of organs.<sup>[2]</sup> Many medical students have revealed that while very few of them have acquired the knowledge of organ donation from their Medical Colleges, many more of them have acquired it by reading newspapers and other articles.<sup>[2]</sup> Newspaper articles have been known to be misleading, sporting incorrect, and sometimes exaggerated information.<sup>[3]</sup>

Thus, today teaching interventions are required at the level of medical colleges to educate the medical students regarding various aspects of organ donation.<sup>[4]</sup>

It is time to appeal to the medical council of India to make organ donation-related education a mandatory part of the New Medical Curriculum which stresses on early clinical exposure as well education of medical students in attitude, ethics, and communication skills.<sup>[5]</sup> Education regarding organ donation should begin right in the Phase 1, through teaching interventions regarding the physiology of the organs from point of view of organ functioning, effects of its failure and anatomical aspects relevant in transplant surgery. Aspects of organ donation such as infection, rejection of transplanted organs, the pathology, and related immunotherapy could be introduced in the Phase 2. The crucial concept of brain death, its diagnosis and declaration and its role in organ donation can be taught in Phase 3 along with the surgical, social, and legal aspects of organ donation. Medical students could be encouraged to take up electives in relation to organ donation-related activities.

A medical student empowered with this education will be a well-directed and motivated disseminator of this important knowledge in the society and could be pivotal in solving the challenge of organ shortage.

*Vaishaly Bharambe*

Department of Anatomy, Symbiosis International (Deemed) University, Symbiosis Medical College for Women, Maharashtra, India


**Address for correspondence:** Dr. Vaishaly Bharambe, Department of Anatomy, Symbiosis International (Deemed) University, Symbiosis Medical College for Women, Lavale, Pune, Maharashtra, India.  
E-mail: hod.anatomy@smcw.siu.edu.in

**Submission:** 11-05-2020, **Decision:** 03-07-2020, **Acceptance:** 27-07-2020, **Web Publication:** 12-02-2021

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<b>Quick Response Code:</b> 	<b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.mjdrdyvp.org">www.mjdrdyvp.org</a>
	<b>DOI:</b> 10.4103/mjdrdypu.mjdrdypu_247_20

**How to cite this article:** Bharambe V. Organ shortage: Can educating the medical students be the key? *Med J DY Patil Vidyapeeth* 2021;14:468.