

**Donation and organ transplantation in public opinion of Russians
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This article is a part of a public report of the survey carried out by the Levada-Center¹, dedicated to the study of the problems of organ donation in Russia. On the basis of a nationwide survey² of public opinion the author analyzes views and positions of Russians in relation to organ donation.

Keywords: organ donation, organ transplantation, transplantation, public opinion, sociology, public attitudes

Footnote 1. Detailed info see in: Organ donation: Problems and Prospects in Russia // Report of the Levada Center, 2013 <http://www.levada.ru/books/donorstvo-organov-problemy-i-perspektivy-razvitiya-v-rossii>

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Conclusions

Summarizing the reviewed position of the population, we can say that the prevailing cultural perceptions of Russians do not currently provide a positive precedent for the development of the organ donation system based on the solidary principle of "organ bequeathing". Despite the declared importance to develop this field of medicine, the need for personal and mass public participation stays "beyond the frames" of the Russian people's understanding. Opinion on the acceptability of using organs from deceased and living donors is perceived as necessary steps in terms of the deficit of donor organs. However, behavioral attitudes of Russians lag behind this perception. The situation is aggravated by the presence of stereotypes and the lack of knowledge about the possibilities of becoming a post-mortem organ donor, and about transplantation benefits.

There is no clear-cut altruistic position regarding organ donation among the population: the proportions of those who advocate rewarded or gratuitous basis for both living and post-mortem organ donations are approximately equal, which is typical for all population groups with various financial circumstances. In this regard, the conception of Russians on the modus operandi of donor system is getting closer to that existing in developing countries, where, in the presence of a considerable social differentiation, a low level of well-being creates a basis for the development of an illegal donor organ market or paid organ donation forms.

Existing organ donation system is not supported by the position of the general population: Russian people consider that there is a deficit of solidarity and trust in society. This is evidenced by a significant gap between the willingness to be an organ donor for a close relative (limited to children and spouses) and the desire to bequeath one's organs under the posthumous donation principle. A comparison of data on public position in regard to bequeathing organs for post-mortem donation and actual donor activity between Russia and European countries has shown that Russia occupies one of the last places in both these aspects, making it necessary to develop efficient mechanisms to improve the public participation in donor practices.

Strong stereotypes accompanied by fears about an illegal nature of donor organ harvesting enlighten the need to overcome the existing negative image of transplantation in the opinion of the population. Increasing participation of the population in bequeathing their organs must be accompanied by an information (explanatory) campaign educating the public in donation issues. An important prerequisite for a long-term development of this field is to achieve an increasing public confidence in the procedures that will govern the human right to the opportunity to dispose of one's organs. A complex and unclear mechanism of expressing people's will unlikely contribute to the trust among the population to the national donor programs.