

Physicians have higher rate of organ donation registration than general public

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A study that included about 15,000 physicians found that they were more likely to be registered as an organ donor compared to the general public, according to a study in the July 16 issue of *JAMA*.

A shortage of organs for transplant has prompted many countries to encourage [citizens](#) to register ("opt in") to donate their organs and tissues when they die. However, less than 40 percent of the public is registered for organ donation in most countries with a registry. "One common fear is that physicians will not take all measures to save the life of a registered citizen at a time of illness. Showing that many physicians are registered for organ donation themselves could help dispel this myth. Although most physicians in surveys support organ donation, whether they are actually registered remains unknown," according to background information in the article.

Alvin Ho-ting Li, B.H.Sc., of Western University, London, Ontario, Canada, and colleagues used various databases to determine the proportion of physicians (n = 15,233), the general public (n = 10,866,752) or matched citizens (n = 60,932) of Ontario, Canada who were registered for deceased organ donation. Matched citizens were a comparison group with similar backgrounds as physicians and matched to each physician by age, sex, income, and neighborhood.

A total of 6,596 physicians (43.3 percent) were registered, a significantly higher proportion than matched citizens (29.5 percent) or the general public (23.9 percent). Physicians were 47 percent more likely to be

registered for organ and tissue donation than matched citizens. Similar to factors associated with registration in nonphysicians, younger physicians and women were more likely to register.

Among those registered for [organ donation](#), 11.7 percent of [physicians](#), 14.3 percent of matched citizens, and 16.8 percent of the general public excluded at least 1 organ or tissue from donation.

The authors note that future research should determine if these findings are generalizable to other countries.

More information: [DOI: 10.1001/jama.2014.2934](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2014.2934)

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