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„Factors influencing number of donations in Subcarpatian region”

SUMMARY

The number of organ transplants performed in Poland is still too low to meet the needs of its residents.

Organs collected from deceased donors, constituting in Poland nearly 95% of transplantation activity, play a key role in saving humans life. The number of organ collected and transplanted in Poland in relation to the number of inhabitants is much lower than in some other European countries.

In the absence of legal restrictions and health contraindications, the deceased patient in the mechanism of brain death should be qualified for organ donation. In Poland, the principle of presumed consent for collection is regulated by the Ordinance of the Minister of Health of December 1, 2006, while in practice, the decision to donate organs is always consulted with the family. According to Nicolas Tilney: the reason for too low, in relation to the needs, number of performed organ transplant surgery in Poland are psychological and moral problems as well as the lack of universal acceptance of organs from the deceased. What is really needed, is social awareness and acceptance of this method of treatment and promoting the idea of transplantation, both in the medical environment and in the society.

Therefore, there are factors necessary for the organ donation program to develop effectively, such as: universal social acceptance, an effective system for identifying potential donors, and an appropriate staff approach to donor's family conversation.

The aim of the study

The subject of the work is:

1. Diagnosis of physicians' and nurses' attitudes towards organ procurement.
2. Diagnosing the opinion of the Subcarpatian's region medical community on barriers and factors favouring organ donations.
3. Understanding the causes of low number of organ donations from deceased persons in the Subcarpatian region

Material and methods

The study is based on the indirect measurement method using a proprietary questionnaire created specifically for the needs of the work. For each of the two categories of respondents (physicians, nurses), a separate research tool was developed. In each one, apart from the specific questions, there was a block of joint questions enabling comparisons of attitudes and opinions. The questionnaire was completed by the respondents themselves what, in contrast to the individual interview with the respondents, created a full sense of anonymity. The questionnaire addressed to physicians consisted of 20 questions, while the questionnaire for nurses of 24 questions.

Two groups of respondents were surveyed using the indirect measurement method: 1) n = 107 physicians working in intensive care units, neurosurgery and neuroscience in over a dozen hospitals located in the Subcarpatian's region (i.e. specialists who may be part of the commission deciding on human death based on neurological criteria), 2) n = 307 nurses from intensive care units, neurosurgery and neurology or neurology with a sub-unit in over a dozen or so hospitals located in the Subcarpatian's region

Results

In total, 600 copies of the questionnaire were sent out, 414 completed questionnaires were returned, which is 69% of the responses given. All the respondents were employed in hospitals in which theoretically there is a possibility of donor identification and the qualification of potential dead donors and organ donation (i.e. hospitals with an intensive care unit; the possibility of mechanical ventilation and an operating room where organs could be obtained). 100% of physicians and over 90% of nurses accept the idea of organ donation to save lives, of which only 84.1% of doctors and 65.2% of nurses declare their consent to donate their own organs after death. It turned out that only 27.1% of doctors and 26.4% of nurses in the last year participated in the care of deceased potential organ donor or in the brain death recognition procedure.

Both, in the opinion of nurses and doctors the most common reason for the withdrawal from brain death recognition were medical contraindications. As a reason for the low number of organ donations in the Subcarpatian region, respondents primarily indicated the refusal of the deceased's family.

The part regarding the assessment of the respondent's knowledge revealed that as many as 60% of the questioned physicians and 51.8% of nurses assess their knowledge about

transplantology only sufficiently and emphasize the need for trainings in this field.

Conclusions

1. The majority of the Subcarpatian's medical community accepts the idea of donation, but not all of accepters would agree to consent their own organs after death;
2. The main reasons for the low number of donations in the region are the lack of identification of deceased persons and lack of identification of the ability to bring the potential donor to the actual donor;
3. Specialized education and training of medical personnel involved in the transplantation process, is necessary, especially on the topic of difficulties in family approach and coping with stress.

Key words: donation, organ transplantation, attitudes towards organ procurement and transplantation