

Trillium Gift of Life Network



Backgrounder

April 15, 2004

Trillium Gift of Life Network - Attitudinal Research

Overview

Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN), the agency responsible for organ and tissue donation in the Province of Ontario, has announced the results of attitudinal research conducted in March 2004 by Navigator Ltd.

The project involved a survey of 603 Ontarians from March 23, 2004 to March 29, 2004. The survey was conducted using a random digit dialing technique with a proportionate province-wide sample.

The results obtained in this research will provide a benchmark for TGLN that will serve to track future trends and contribute to an overall understanding of issues surrounding organ and tissue donation.

Ontarians are Strong Supporters of Organ Donation

A strong majority of Ontarians (77 per cent) indicate they are willing to donate their own organs for transplant purposes. A majority (66 per cent) indicate that they would be likely to consent to donating family member's organs even if they were unsure of the family member's donation wishes. When aware of the donor's desire to donate, an overwhelming majority (94 per cent) are either *very likely* (85 per cent) or *somewhat likely* (8 per cent) to donate a family member's organs when a request has been made.

Most Ontarians Have Direct Experience with the Topic of Organ Donation

Most Ontarians have some type of personal experience with organ donation. The survey asked Ontarians about possible types of experience associated with organ donation including:

- Signing an organ donor card,
- Having a family discussion,
- Telling a family member about your wish to donate or not,
- Having a family member tell you about their wish to donate or not,
- Current awareness of organ donation issues and desire to learn more



Just over half of the province (53 per cent) report having signed an organ donor card. Forty-five per cent of those who have not signed claim they would be willing to do so.

Ontarians are virtually unanimous (96 per cent) in their belief that it is important to tell their families whether or not they would want their organs to be donated after death. Over half of Ontarians (55 per cent) say they have told their family of their wish to donate their organs. Only seven per cent say they have told their families they do not wish to be an organ donor. Forty-four per cent say that family members have indicated their wish to donate their own organs. Just 14 per cent say a family member has indicated their wish not to be a donor.

A total of 44 per cent say they have participated in a family discussion about organ donation. While 37 per cent of all discussions end up with all participants deciding to donate, only two per cent end up with all participants deciding not to donate.

A growing number of Ontarians (38 per cent) believe they understand the details of organ donation and more than two out of three Ontarians are interested in learning more (69 per cent).

Attitudes towards Donation

Eighty-five per cent of Ontarians would accept an organ transplant if they had a life-threatening disease that could only be treated with a transplant.

Using a scale of 1-10, where one is *not at all successful* and 10 is *extremely successful*, Ontarians were asked to indicate what they believe to be the level of success for organ transplants. The average score is 7.1, indicating that most Ontarians believe that organ transplants are successful.

Using the same scale to measure perceptions of the level of need for organ transplants where a score of one indicates *no need at all* and a score of 10 indicates *an extremely great need*, the average score is 8.9. Ontarians understand the great need for organ transplants.



Living Donors

There is real potential to expand the base of living donors. Almost all respondents (93 per cent) agree that you can be a living donor and live an active life. When asked about their willingness to be a living donor, 95 per cent of respondents say they would be likely to donate to a family member, 85 per cent say they would be likely to donate to a close friend, and 48 per cent say they would be likely to donate to a stranger. Ontarians are also overwhelmingly willing to accept an organ from a living donor (84 per cent).

While 86 per cent of Ontarians have not received any general information on organ donation from their workplace, the majority would be interested in hearing general information (59 per cent) or information about benefits and job protection for living donors (59 per cent).

The full research results are available at www.giftoflife.on.ca

About Trillium Gift of Life Network:

Trillium Gift of Life Network is Ontario's central organ and tissue donation agency responsible for significantly increasing organ and tissue donation across the province and improving related processes and functions.

As outlined by the *Trillium Gift of Life Network Act*, the Network's mandate includes:

- ❑ advising the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on matters relating to the donation of organs and tissue;
- ❑ planning, promoting, coordinating and supporting activities relating to the donation of organs and tissue for transplant;
- ❑ planning, promoting, coordinating and supporting activities relating to education or research in connection with the donation of organs and tissue.