

Most U.S. Adults Believe in the Importance of Organ Donation but are Ambivalent About How...

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Most U.S. Adults Believe in the Importance of Organ Donation but are Ambivalent About How to Increase the Number of Donors

ROCHESTER, N.Y. -- June 6, 2007-- Half of all U.S. adults say they have registered as an organ donor, but only one in four has informed their family that they are willing to be a donor. Most adults believe it is important to reflect upon the benefits and risks of organ donation when considering whether or not to become a donor. Large majorities believe it is important to consider the ability to save someone's life -- including the lives of family members or friends. However, substantial majorities also believe that it is important to consider the type of surgery involved, health risks that might be associated with the procedure, and the reputation of the hospital or doctor that would conduct surgery.

These are some of the results of an online survey of 2,136 U.S. adults, ages 18 and older, conducted by Harris Interactive® between May 2 and 4, 2007 for The Wall Street Journal Online's Health Industry Edition (www.wsj.com/health).

According to the American Society of Transplantation, more than 95,000 individuals in the U.S. are presently in need of a kidney transplant. Today, patients needing kidney transplants must receive an organ from a family member or friend who is willing to serve as a living donor, or enroll on a waiting list for organs from deceased individuals who had indicated their desire to donate a kidney to an anonymous recipient. Many patients each year have a family member or friend who is willing to donate a kidney, but he or she is not biologically compatible to the person needing the transplant. As a result, many patients remain on the waiting list until another suitable donor can be found.

The Living Kidney Organ Donation Clarification Act-- recently passed by the U.S. House of Representatives -- is targeted to this specific group of donors and patients. The bill allows for mismatched donor-recipient pairs to be cross matched thus allowing both patients to receive the kidney donations they need. Most adults -- when the process is described to them -- are uncertain that this would make a difference in their own willingness to become a living kidney donor; but one in five adults say that it would increase their willingness to do so.

Other options have been discussed to increase the rate of living organ donations in the U.S. Some of these include various financial incentives such as cash payments, tax credits or contributions to savings accounts. The public is ambivalent and cautious about these types of proposals; twice as many people strongly oppose such incentives as strongly favor them. Most adults believe that financial incentives would make it easier for wealthier Americans to gain access to needed organ donations while also causing poorer people to resort to organ donation as a means of making money. Public opinion is divided as to whether or not financial incentives would improve patients' access to needed organ donations regardless of their financial status.

Base: All Adults

Registered as an organ donor, either on my driver's license or through my state's registry

Informed my family in writing that I would like to be an organ donor

Base: All Adults

My ability to directly help a family member or friend

My ability to save someone's life

The type of surgery involved

The risks to my own health

The reputation of the hospital or doctor conducting the surgery

Whether I would be financially compensated%236513771562

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding. TABLE 3 WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER KIDNEY DONATIONS "The House of Representatives recently passed a bill related to kidney transplants. The bill addresses situations in which a patient who needs a transplant has found a willing donor, but the donor does not biologically match with the patient. The bill would allow the donor to trade with another mismatched donor, so that both patients could receive a transplant. How would a system like this affect your willingness to donate a kidney?"

Base: All AdultsÂ Total%

Greatly/Somewhat Increase Willingness to Donate (NET)21

Greatly increase my willingness to donate a kidney8

Somewhat increase my willingness to donate a kidney13

Neither increase or decrease my willingness to donate a kidney68

Greatly/Somewhat Decrease Willingness to Donate (NET)11

Somewhat decrease my willingness to donate a kidney4

Greatly decrease my willingness to donate a kidney7 TABLE 4 SUPPORT OF FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR ORGAN DONATION "Currently, it is illegal for an organ donor to receive any financial incentives for their organ donation. Some have suggested this should be changed. To what extent would you favor or oppose organ donors receiving financial incentives for their donation?"

Base: All AdultsÂ Total%

Favor Strongly/Somewhat (NET)49

Favor strongly11

Favor somewhat38

Oppose Strongly/Somewhat (NET)51

Oppose somewhat28

Oppose strongly23 TABLE 5 PERCEPTIONS OF PROVIDING FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR ORGAN DONATION "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?"

Base: All AdultsÂ Â Agree Strongly/ Somewhat (NET) Agree Strongly Agree Somewhat Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly. Somewhat (NET) Disagree Somewhat Disagree Strongly

Allowing people to receive financial incentives for organ donations will make it easier for many more people, regardless of the income, to get organs when they need them.%46153128261412

Allowing people to receive financial incentives for organ donations will only make it easier for wealthy people to get organs when they need them.%673730221174

Allowing people to receive financial incentives for organ donations will cause poorer people to resort to organ donation as a means of making money.%71294220963 TABLE 6 WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER PURCHASING AN ORGAN FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY "There are far more people who need organ donations than there are organs available for donation. Because of this, there is a long waiting list to receive an organ. If you needed an organ donation, and there was not an organ available for you in the United States, how likely would you be to consider buying an organ from another country?"

Base: All AdultsÂ Total%

Very/Somewhat Likely to Consider (NET)26

Very likely to consider14

Somewhat likely to consider12

Uncertain44

Very/Somewhat Unlikely to Consider (NET)30

Somewhat unlikely to consider8

Very unlikely to consider23

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Methodology

Harris Interactive® conducted this online survey within the United States between May 2 and 4, 2007 among a national cross section of 2,136 adults, ages 18 years and over. Figures for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, income and region were weighted where necessary to align with population proportions. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All surveys are subject to several sources of error. These include: sampling error (because only a sample of a population is interviewed); measurement error due to question wording and/or question order, deliberately or unintentionally inaccurate responses, nonresponse (including refusals), interviewer effects (when live interviewers are used) and weighting.

With one exception (sampling error) the magnitude of the errors that result cannot be estimated. There is, therefore, no way to calculate a finite "margin of error" for any survey and the use of these words should be avoided.

With pure probability samples, with 100 percent response rates, it is possible to calculate the probability that the sampling error (but not other sources of error) is not greater than some number. With pure probability samples of 2,136 one could say with a ninety-five percent probability that the results would have a sampling error of +/- 3.5 percentage points. Sampling error for data based on sub-samples would be higher and may vary. However, that does not take other sources of error into account. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

About The Wall Street Journal Online

The Wall Street Journal Online at WSJ.com, published by Dow Jones & Company (NYSE: DJ), is the largest paid subscription news site on the Web. Launched in 1996, the Online Journal continues to attract quality subscribers that are at the top of their industries, with 931,000 subscribers world-wide as of Q1, 2007.

The Online Journal offers three industry-specific verticals: the award-winning Health, Media & Marketing and now Law. Health offers authoritative analysis, breaking news and commentary from top industry journalists. Media & Marketing is designed for professionals in the advertising, marketing, entertainment and media industries. Law is designed to provide law firms and attorneys timely information on events and trends important to the legal market. Subscribers to these verticals also get access to the full content of the Online Journal.

In 2005, the Online Journal was awarded a Codie Award for Best Online News Service for the second consecutive year, and its Health Industry Edition was awarded Best Online Science or Technology Service for the third consecutive year. The Wall Street Journal Online network includes CareerJournal.com, OpinionJournal.com, StartupJournal.com, RealEstateJournal.com and CollegeJournal.com.

About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive is the 12th largest and fastest-growing market research firm in the world. The company provides innovative research, insights and strategic advice to help its clients make more confident decisions which lead to measurable and enduring improvements in performance. Harris Interactive is widely known for The Harris Poll, one of the longest running, independent opinion polls and for pioneering online market research methods. The company has built what it believes to be the world's largest panel of survey respondents, the Harris Poll Online. Harris Interactive serves clients worldwide through its United States, Europe and Asia offices, its wholly-owned subsidiaries Novatris in France and MediaTransfer AG in Germany, and through a global network of independent market research firms. More information about Harris Interactive may be obtained at www.harrisinteractive.com.

To become a member of the Harris Poll Online and be invited to participate in online surveys, register at www.harrispollonline.com.

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