

“VOLUNTARY BODY DONATION” THE GIFT THAT LIVES ON FOREVER

A Survey of awareness in S.V.S. MEDICAL & DENTAL COLLEGES, Mahaboonagar (A.P., INDIA)

Dr. S. Saritha, Dr.M.Vittooo rao, Dr. Sumangala, Dr. G. Supriya, Mr. Praveen Kumar
Department of Anatomy

Abstract

Body donation is a gracious act, **Shankarcharaya** firmly believed in concept of Body Donation or Organ Donation and said **Iddham sharirum paropakaram** i.e. the body is for use of others and death is not the end, it is the beginning. Anatomy is important basic subject for medical students, both U.G. & P.G. Best method of Anatomy learning is by dissection on human cadavers, which remains principle teaching tool. Human cadavers for purpose of study are a scarcity with mushrooming of medical institutions in this country. Unclaimed bodies are no more origin of cadavers. **Whole Body donation is the need of the hour. A Voluntary Body Donation is defined as the act of giving one's Body after death for Medical research and education.** In this article a survey was done in S.V.S. Medical & Dental Colleges Faculty members and medical exhibition visitors which include lawyers, engineers, teachers and others during the year of 2010. The body donation including organ donation and various factors such as age, religion, culture and donor's attitude are discussed. Body donation provides the students and medical researchers with unparalleled opportunities to study the human body. Computers nor books cannot totally replace body dissection in learning the anatomy.

Key words: Voluntary body donation (VBD), Cadavers, Dissection, Anatomy act, organ donation.

Introduction

Anatomy is a unique subject dealing with the knowledge of study of the human body structures. A sound knowledge of the anatomy is very essential for medical students to begin their medical career and later become effective and competitive medical professionals. Thus the material mainly utilized for practical purposes are dead bodies. Teaching and research in anatomy is mainly based on **cadaver dissection**. Dissections of unclaimed bodies obtained from the police are not only source of cadavers, but also from Voluntary body donation for the same is important. Burial or cremation of dead bodies is a symbol of **religious tradition followed in India**. However the concept of awareness of VBD in large scale is uttermost necessity of the hour. **Voluntary body donation** is regulated by various acts and specific laws lay down according to each county.

Each cadaver is like a new source of knowledge as many variations can be identified which could help the clinicians. In addition to this; these donations help the surgeons to experiment innovative surgical skills and procedures in form of cadaver labs, workshops, thus giving them an opportunity to explore in a realistic manner. Another innovation evolved are the cadaver banks like brain banks, kidneys, liver, skin and vessel bank which form a collection for organ donation when need is required. **Voluntary body donations are precious gift to the mankind.** The inability of our Medical Institutions to attract VBD for the purpose of dissection might be due to social and religious concepts present in our INDIA. Therefore it is suggested that medical institutions and anatomists embark more enlightenment campaign regarding VBD by conducting **medical exhibition** and explain this VBD is a noble act.

CADAVERS

C: Calmness and peace which we do not have.

A: A frozen picture of life.

D: Distribute what they left.

A: A knowledge which can save the present living.

V: Vital information they impart.

E: Every part we explore, a mystery in its own way.

R: Respectable work, even in their death bed.

S: Sincere “Thank’s” to the teaching dead.

AIM “Anatomical gift means: donation of all parts of the human body”

- Burial or cremation of dead bodies is a symbol of leaving a tradition followed.
- Unclaimed cadavers and voluntary donated bodies remain a principal teaching tool for anatomists and medical educators.
- Whole body donation is the need of the hour.
A survey was conducted in S.V.S. Medical & Dental College among the teaching and non-teaching staff regarding VBD. We also conducted a survey with the visitors who came for Medical Exhibition during the period 2010. Organ donation aspect was also highlighted in this article.

Materials and methods

Anatomy the study of the structure of the human body. It is first basic and very important subject studied by medical and dental students when they begin their medical career. Anatomy teaching is done on body dissection. Cadavers arrived in the department of Anatomy are mainly unclaimed bodies only. The study analysis of the medical & dental students is at the **ratio of 1:25** (cadaver: students). Normal being 1: 10 cadaver: student ratio.

A cross sectional analysis was conducted at S.V.S. Medical & Dental Colleges, Mahaboonagar, INDIA, among the doctors and non-teaching staff, about 500 members. It also includes medical exhibition visitors i.e. the lawyers, engineers, teachers, farmers and others about 2000 -3000 members. Data was collected by giving a **questionnaire** to the consenting individuals in the age group 20- 65 years during the period 2010.

Questionnaire designed to assess regarding voluntary body donation was provided to the study population:

1. Age, sex and religion.
2. Positive and negative attitudes towards VBD and organ donation.
3. Willingness to donate their body after death to the medical institutions

SLOGAN OF THE MEDICAL EXHIBITION (IN- 2010) WAS VBD



STUDENTS CADAVER RATIO

25:1

BURIAL PROCEDURES (MODEL)

(in the medical exhibition)



Discussion

Donating your body is a generous and legal act, governed by the Code of Public Health. It is a voluntary act that a person can do to save lives or to give his body to science. Donations of the body are mainly to the medical colleges for teaching and research purposes.

Supply of human cadavers for anatomy course is the responsibility of Institutions. Alongside primary medical schools there is large number of other users who are trying to secure cadavers for their own needs. i.e. Allied medical professionals, medical researchers, orthopedic surgeons general surgeons tune their skills on the cadavers, includes neurosurgeons require human brains for their study. A good cadaver is one, not obese or evidently not diseased.

United States & other countries, which require cadavers, voice their fear of shortage of cadavers. (Agthong and Wiwanitkit 2002; Assemblee Nationale du Quebec 2004; U.K. Department of Health 2002).¹

Question of shortage of the cadavers often facing the taboo on trading Human anatomical goods. (Delmonica et.al.2002; Scheper-Hughes2000; Titmuss 1971).²

Blood, Organs and Cadavers donations are better left untouched by market. Their sacredness sets them from other traded goods. Cadavers and donated bodies remain an important teaching method in gross anatomy. Knowledge obtained through dissection of human body is an indispensable part of education for medical professionals. Transactions for organ donation for transplants is also facilitated but banned because of trade business. But specific rules are laid down to help the needy patients by the organization. (Philippe Steiner 2009).³

Body donation and its relevance in anatomy learning was done by Rajkumari Ajita, Y.Ibochouba Singh (2007)⁴

The demand for cadavers remains strong and numerous ideas have been voiced to augment the supply. Body donation is a generous and unselfish act for those who wish to be useful to the

living after death. The donor will help the medical students to further learning and research (Patnaik 2002)⁵

The present study includes a semi-structured, pretested, questionnaire designed to assess regarding whole body donation was provided to the study population that includes medical, dental faculty members both teaching and non-teaching staff. (Around 500-600 members). The individuals returned the completed questionnaire. The Medical & Dental members' results showed that, 80% believed that donated bodies were misused and they are not ready to donate their bodies. Their opinion is Government colleges have plenty of unclaimed bodies for their study and no need for VBD. Secondly Private institutions are commercial, therefore no need of VBD. While only 4% had already registered their own names for body donation, Among the Non-medical professionals who visited the medical exhibition (2000-3000) 99% did not know about the body donation. Of course good number of them says that it is noble case. Some are not interested in donating mainly because of religious tradition. Only 22% of youngsters (25-40 Years) polled to donate their bodies for medical education. These results suggest medical professionals have to explain about VBD is as important, and educate the general public.

Body donation and Anatomy act:

This act enacted by various states in India for supplying of unclaimed bodies to Medical and Teaching institutions for anatomy dissections for students and for other similar purposes. Unclaimed cadavers can be obtained legally by the police. Anatomy act is a State Act published in State Government Gazette, which regulates the use of dead bodies for medical research and education.

In India the Anatomy act was enacted in 1949, which has been adopted in all the states of India. It provides for collection of a dead body for teaching purpose, only if death occurs in a state hospital or in a public place within the prescribed zone of medical institution, provided the police declared a lapse of 48 hours, that there are no claimants for the body and it could be used for medical education.(Subramaniam-1999)⁵

Bodies not suitability for donation:

1. Decomposed body. 2. Obesity 3. Extreme emaciation 4. Suicide or homicide. 5. Death due contagious diseases

Individual organs donation is also useful to mankind. In USA, organ donation is 99% favorable. In Hyderabad a Private organization MOHAN FOUNDATION started in 2002 for individual organ donation The **THEME** says that one individual can save nine lives.

Mohan foundation is dedicated to save numerous lives that are being lost for want of vital organ at the critical time.



MOHAN FOUNDATION MESSAGE

Organ donation is priceless & invaluable.

- A rally of 2000 km on motor bikes covering nine major cities in Tamilnadu was taken to promote organ donation.
- Training social workers, medical & paramedical staff on counseling families of brain death patients to donate organs.
- Brain death – brain injury or hemorrhage due to major road accidents.
- **Donor card** expressing wish to donate your organs by will. Card always kept in your purse.

GOVT. OF INDIA – GAZETTE has maintain certain laws for ORGAN DONATION

- The Transplantation of human organ act 1994 prohibits commercial dealings in organs and makes this a punishable offence.
- The Transplantation of human organs rules finally introduced in 1995
- Has made transplant coordinator nomination mandatory before a hospital is registered as a transplant hospital.

CONCLUSION

The generous act is therefore is the **gift of his/her body to the researchers to progress in the field of medicine.** One has to Choose between donating your organs or body to science.

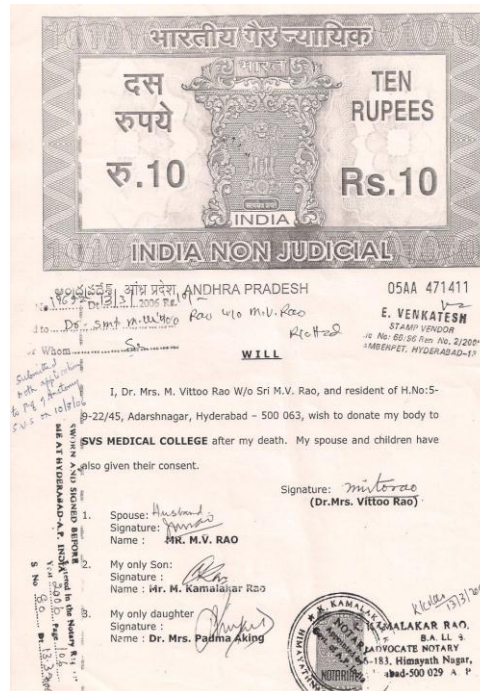
Generally, you cannot do both..

Donation provides students unparalleled opportunities to study the human body. It is done by following:

- 1) By developing a VBD program in each institute, so that the death of cadaver can be solved.

- 2) Public campaigns, by use of media for creation of awareness will definitely benefit the institutions.
- 3) A concept of cadaver pooling can be done at the level of **district/state and national**, so that cadaver shortage problem might be solved.

There is a need for creating an increased awareness of whole body donation and also organ donation by various programs.



This is to inform that Dr. **VITTOO RAO** (the author of this article) as donated her body to the medical institute. The above is **JUDICIAL NOTE**

Acknowledgements to unknown teachers

We Anatomists and thousands of medical students sincerely place our regards to hundreds of unknown dead people who taught us Anatomy by sparing their bodies.

References

1. Agthong S., and V.Wiwanitkit, .2002.”Cadaver donation: A retrospective review at the King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital, Bangkok” The Southeast Asian Journal of Tropical Medicine and Public Health 33:166-167.
2. Delmonico, Francis L.,Robert Arnold, Nancy Scheper-Hugues,Laura A .Siminoff,Jeffrey Kahn, and Stuart J. Youngner.2002” Ethical Incentives-Non Payment- For Organ Donation “

- New England Journal of Medicine 346;2002-2005 . 3.
- 3.Stringency of the ban on market transactions for organs.-Steiner, Philippe, 2006, Le Don d'Organe: Une Typologie, Analytique.In Revue Française de Sociologie, 47,479-509.
4. Body Donation and Its Relevance in Anatomy Learning –A Review Authors: Rajkumari Ajita, Y.Ibochouba Singh.(2007-01-2007-06).
5. Patnaik, V.V.G. (2002): Editorial J Anat Soc India: 50 (2): 143-144.
6. Subramanian B.V. Law in relation to medical men In: Modi 'Medical Jurisprudence and Toxicology 22 edition: Butterworth. New Delhi pp. 724-727. (1999).