

CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Understanding the role of social norms in organ donation decision making among African American adults

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Background: African Americans (AAs) comprise a disproportionate number of those waiting on the national transplant list and are underrepresented among registered organ donors. While barriers to organ donation are well understood, little research has explored factors that facilitate interest in donation. Because AAs are often characterized by strong extended relationships and shared decision-making, social norms may be an influential factor in donation behavior. Utilizing the Theory of Reasoned Action, this study demonstrated the application of theory to understand the role social norms play in donation decision-making, among AAs.

Methods: Self-administered questionnaires were completed by 425 AA adults residing in the metropolitan Atlanta area. Social norms were measured using a Likert scale consisting of two items that addressed perceptions of favorability of donation and levels of influence a loved one has over the participant's donation decision making. Main outcomes assessed were donation intentions and expression of donation intentions via designation on one's driver's license.

Results: Logistic regression results indicate that a loved one's level of favorability of donation is associated with both intention (OR=2.14, $p \leq 0.01$) and expression (OR=1.71, $p \leq 0.01$); however, findings approached significance with the level of influence a loved one has on intentions (OR=1.47, $p = 0.07$) but was not associated with expression ($p > 0.05$).

Conclusions: The results suggest that a loved one's level of favorability has an effect on donation decision making, but, conversely, a loved one's level of influence does not impact donation decision making. Focusing on social norms and encouraging communication may prove useful for future interventions to improve engagement in donation among AAs.