

Attitudes surrounding organ donation in relation to gender in Ireland

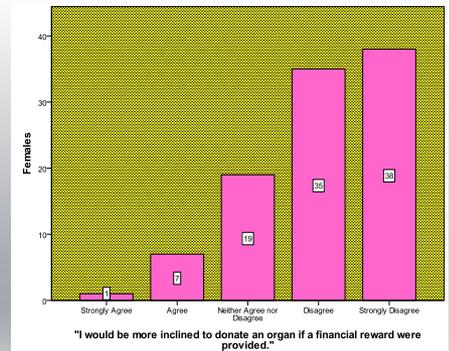
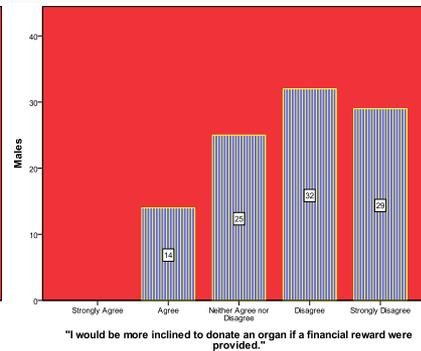
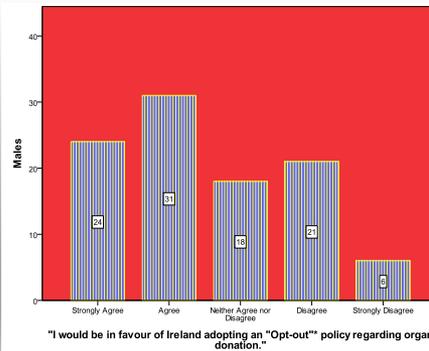
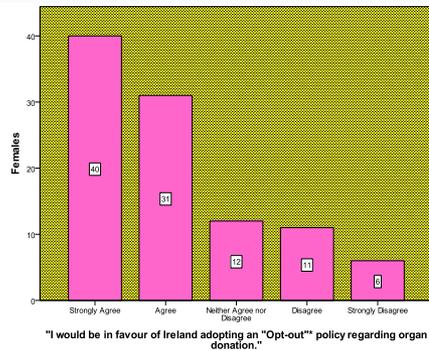
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Abstract:

The lack of organs available for donation is a major issue worldwide. The intention of this piece of research was to investigate the differences in attitudes to organ donation between males and females in Ireland. Following a German study, the objective was to paint a picture of the current state of attitudes to practices such as an 'Opt-Out' policy, organ recipient preference, etc.

Introduction:

The supporting hypothesis to this research was that a difference would be observed in the attitudes to organ donation between males and females. Further, it was expected that females would exhibit a more positive attitude to organ donation than would males. Factors such as altruistic tendencies and ethical viewpoint were expected to play a role in dictating attitudes to donation, however this research also questions the impact of other considerations such as religious beliefs, the influence of media and degree of relatedness between family members. Following Steinman, J., L., (2006), an investigation was also carried out on attitudes to organs as a commodity, and indeed towards incentivised organ donation.



Method:

Data for this piece of research was obtained by means of a questionnaire, n=200 (100 males & 100 females). Responses were garnered at four distinct locations: O'Connell Street, Dublin 1; Grafton Street, Dublin 2; Navan, Co. Meath; Kells, Co. Meath. The research was quasi-experimental in design, with two independent variables (males and females). Results were analysed by means of t-testing to ascertain statistical significance.

Discussion:

The outcomes of this research serve to reflect the intricate nature of the organ donation paradigm, and indeed its relation to gender separated attitudes in Ireland. This research proved the above hypothesis in some contexts (donating after death, opt-out policy, consent on behalf of family member) but disproved it in others (donating in health, incentivised donation, recipient preference). Further study (likely qualitative in nature) would be useful in reasoning these differences in attitudes.

Key References:

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- Fehr, E. F. (2003). The nature of human altruism. *Nature*, 425
- Steinman, J., L. (2006). Gender disparity in organ donation. *Gender Medicine*, Vol. 3, No.7.
- European Commission. (2007). Europeans and Organ Donation. European Commission.