

# CULTURAL INFLUENCES ASSOCIATED WITH ORGAN DONATION IN NEW ZEALAND

Kate Staples 09007060

Aim: To examine how nurses can attend to the cultural complexities in the decision making process of organ donation in Aotearoa/New Zealand

Introduction: Culture influences individuals' lives and provides the basis for their decisions. The process of organ donation and transplantation is often associated with huge ethical intricacies faced by those involved when making a decision. Globally, there has been an increase in the demand for organ donation and transplantation. New Zealand has one of the lowest organ donations and transplantation rates in the Western world, with just 38 deceased donors in 2012, the same number as the previous year and unchanged from the past decade.

## Cultural disparities:

- Māori and Pacific Island groups are over-represented in the end-stage renal failure and dialysis population.
- Māori and Pacific Island organ donation rates compared to non-Māori are also proportionately lower.
- Due to tissue typing, lower donation rates from Māori result in fewer transplants for this group compared with the larger population.
- Mixed perceptions exist from some groups which believe that people with lower donation rates have "less entitlement" to transplantations.
- Shaw indicates that there is a call to non-Māori groups to recognise the existence of a deeper understanding of the nation's different beliefs and what this difference may mean for people on a "felt level".

## New Zealand's current system:

- Westernised
- Op-in system
- Donors and recipients are to be ~~remained~~ <sup>remain</sup> anonymous

## Traditional Māori beliefs:

- Dictate bodily integrity
- People "should be put back as they came"
- Mind, body and soul influencing physical well-being.
- Removal of body parts from someone is a matter that affects not only the patient but also their whānau.

## How nurses can attend to the cultural complexities:

- Communicating appropriately:
- Choosing the correct **time**
  - Providing an appropriate **setting**
  - Choosing the right staff and family **participants** to be involved
  - Thought about which angle and **approach** to relate to the family. This is determined easier with therapeutic rapport and relationships.
  - Introducing the **information** in an easy, understandable way.
  - Appropriate amount of **content**
  - **Recapping** key points of discussion and reaffirming decisions.
  - Explaining **formalities** and processes.

Austen

## References:

- Austen, D. (2002). *Brain death & organ donation information package*. Ward 5A, Dunedin Public Hospital.
- Organ Donation New Zealand. (2013). *Organ donation new zealand*. Retrieved from <http://www.donor.co.nz/>
- Shaw, R. (2010). Organ donation in Aotearoa/New Zealand: Cultural phenomenology and moral humility. *Body & Society*, 16(3), 127-147. doi:10.1177.1357034x10373405