

## **REQUESTING DONATION WORKSHOPS: AN EDUCATIONAL ROADSHOW. ONE INITIATIVE TO INCREASE ORGAN DONATION**

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The Nephrology and Transplant Directorate, within a large NHS Trust, provides renal transplant services to a population of 2.2 million people. Organ donation is facilitated by the transplant co-ordinator team. The team is responsible for increasing and maintaining the profile of transplantation and all aspects of organ and tissue donation including a responsibility for education programmes.

The regional rate of organ donation was noted to be lower than the national average prompting a need to address this issue. The national potential donor audit, commissioned by the Department of Health, suggests that one reason for this discrepancy is family refusal. This has been attributed to poor public perception of donation issues and lack of professional training for requesting donation by healthcare professionals.

In response to a need to increase donation in this region, a requesting donation roadshow was planned in 2 phases and phase 1 was implemented after a pilot workshop in 2003. The purpose of the pilot was to establish the content and relevance of the workshop programme. Phase 2 involves a further 12 programmes being facilitated throughout the region in 2004. The target is to improve the skills required to request donation from bereaved families.

The course content included the input of a clinical psychologist to highlight grief reactions, actors facilitated this with role play and the transplant co-ordinators reviewed organ donation issues to improve the requesting skills of healthcare professionals. Evaluation involved anonymous pre and post roadshow questionnaires which included an overall evaluation of the day. These forms dealt with confidence and experiences relating to breaking bad news and of requesting organ donation, measured on a Likert scale.

Early evaluations of the educational roadshows were excellent. All of the completed questionnaires described an increase in both confidence and knowledge pre and post workshop. The realism achieved by using actors for the role play scenarios was positively evaluated. These preliminary findings were presented to regional healthcare finance commissioners who approved funding for the implementation of phase 2.

This is an important educational initiative as part of a wider programme aiming to improve cadaveric organ donation rates across the region. By increasing the availability of kidneys for transplantation the renal population are offered the best treatment option for their kidney disease. It helps to reduce the renal transplant waiting list and the cost to the NHS of maintaining people on dialysis.

Interestingly, since the completion of phase 1, and taking into account other initiatives, the referrals for potential organ donors have increased in the region.