

# The Viewpoints of Law and Medical Faculty Students on Organ Donation and Transplantation: A Study in Turkey

## Tıp ve Hukuk Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin Organ Bağışı ve Transplantasyona Bakışı: Türkiye'den Bir Çalışma

Nurdan KIRIMLIOĞLU, MD,<sup>a</sup>  
Dr. Ömür ELÇİOĞLU, MD<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Medical Ethics and History of Medicine,  
Eskisehir Osmangazi University  
Faculty of Medicine, Eskişehir

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Yazışma Adresi/Correspondence:  
Nurdan KIRIMLIOĞLU, MD  
Eskisehir Osmangazi University  
Faculty of Medicine,  
Department of Medical Ethics and History of Medicine,  
Eskişehir,  
TÜRKİYE/TURKEY  
nurdankirimli@hotmail.com

**ABSTRACT Objective:** This study is carried out in order to find out the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, anxieties and reservations of 1st and 3rd year students in the Faculty of Medicine, Eskisehir Osmangazi University and 1st year students in the Faculty of Law Anadolu University about organ donation and transplantation. **Material and Methods:** Participants responded to the questions in the questionnaire related to the organ donation and transplantation. Arithmetic mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentages and t test were used to analyze the data. **Results:** In our study, 116 1st year students in the Faculty of Medicine (74.4%), 40 3rd year students in the Faculty of Medicine (68.9%) and 88 1st year students in the Faculty of Law (69.3%) state that they do not know where the organs are donated. It is found out that 130 1st year students the Faculty of Medicine (83.3%), 44 students in the 3rd year of the Faculty of Medicine (75.9%) and 91 students in the 1st year of the Faculty of Law (71.1%) do not know Law About the Taking, Storing, Grafting and Transplantation of Organs and Tissue, Law no. 2238. **Conclusion:** It is found out that students' attitudes towards organ donation and transplantation are shaped on the basis of personal emotions, and that they do not have sufficient medical and legal knowledge about this issue. Despite the insufficiency of medical and legal knowledge, since the thought of helping people who are in need is among the first factors which influence the decision of organ donation, it is clear that the values which uphold human beings contribute to willingness to organ donation.

**Key Words:** Turkey; organ transplantation; students

**ÖZET Amaç:** Bu çalışma Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi 1. ve 3.sınıf ile Anadolu Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi 1.sınıf öğrencilerinin organ bağışı ve transplantasyon konusunda bilgi, tutum, davranış, kaygı ve çekincelerini belirlemek amacıyla yapılmıştır. **Gereç ve Yöntemler:** Katılımcılar organ bağışı ve transplantasyonla ilgili hazırlanmış soru kağıdını cevaplamışlardır. Verilerin değerlendirilmesinde aritmetik ortalama, standart sapma, frekans, yüzdeler ve t testi kullanılmıştır. **Bulgular:** Çalışmamızda Tıp Fakültesi 1.sınıf öğrencilerinin 116'sı (%74.4), 3.sınıf öğrencilerinin 40'ı (%68.9), Hukuk Fakültesi 1.sınıf öğrencilerinin 88'i (%69.3) organ bağışının nereye yapılacağını bilmediklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Tıp Fakültesi 1.sınıf öğrencilerinin 130'unun (%83.3), 3.sınıf öğrencilerinin 44'ünün (%75.9), Hukuk Fakültesi 1.sınıf öğrencilerinin 91'inin (%71.7) 2238 Sayılı Doku ve Organların Alınması, Saklanması ve Aşılması Hakkında Kanun ile ilgili bilgilerinin olmadığı saptanmıştır. **Sonuç:** Öğrencilerin bağış ve transplantasyona karşı olan tutumlarının kişisel duygular temelinde şekillendiği, tıbbi ve kanuni bilginin azlığı görülmektedir. Tıbbi ve kanuni bilginin yetersizliğine rağmen ihtiyacı olan insanlara yardımcı olmak düşüncesinin organ bağışı yapma ya da düşünmede etkili olan faktörler arasında ilk sırada yer alması insanı düşünerek hareket edilmesini sağlayan değerlerin organ bağışına istekli olmaya katkıda bulunduğunu göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türkiye; organ transplantasyonu; öğrenciler

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The lack of organ donation continues to be a major limiting factor in transplantation.<sup>1,2-4</sup> Worldwide, more than 20% of patients in waiting lists die every year because of the shortage of donor organs.<sup>1,5</sup>

Despite the great need for organ donation, many people continue to remain uncomfortable with the idea. Misperceptions, lack of information, and inaccurate beliefs contribute to this discomfort.<sup>6</sup>

Public attitudes to organ donation and transplantation are influenced by many factors, including education, socio-economic status, culture and religion.<sup>1,7,8</sup>

Human (body) is a joint field of interest of medicine, law and philosophy. Human beings become a field of interest of both medicine and law as soon as they were born. This study is carried out in order to find out the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, anxieties and reservations about organ donation and transplantation of 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year student in the Faculty of Medicine at Osmangazi University and 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law at Anadolu University.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The questionnaires drawn up to find out students' knowledge, attitudes, behaviours anxieties and reservations about organ donation and transplantation were given to 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students in the Faculty of Medicine, Eskisehir Osmangazi University at the end of Professional Skills Laboratory applications, and 214 of 300 questionnaires were evaluated in this study. One hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed to 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law, Anadolu University, and 127 questionnaires were taken into consideration. Participation to this study is 84.6% from the Faculty of Medicine, and 71.3% from the Faculty of Law.

While evaluating the data, arithmetic means, standard deviations and frequency percentages were used, taking account of their measurement lev-

els, in order to describe the variables concerning the respondents, and the significance test between two independent proportions (t test)<sup>9-11</sup> was used to compare the rates of student groups about the factors which influence the act and the thought of organ donation, the motives behind their reluctance to donate organs and from whom organ transplantation should be done. This paper does not include the results which is not statistically significant.

## RESULTS

One hundred and six 1<sup>st</sup> year students from the Faculty of Medicine, 58 3<sup>rd</sup> year students from the Faculty of Medicine and 127 1<sup>st</sup> year students from the Faculty of Law took part in this study. The demographic data concerning the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students in the Faculty of Medicine and 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law are presented in Table 1.

In our study, 116 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Medicine (74;4%), 40 3<sup>rd</sup> year students in the Faculty of Medicine (68;9%) and 88 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law (69;3%) stated that they did not know where the organs were donated.

When the students were asked to indicate the factors which influence the act and the thought of organ donation, the following results were found (Table 2).

The student groups were compared in consideration of their views about these factors. It was found out that 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Medicine attach more importance to the role of media in the act and thought of organ donation than 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students in the Faculty of Medicine ( $t=2.0760$   $t > 1.96$   $p < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, it was seen that 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law emphasize the thought of helping needy people as

TABLE 1: Demographic data of the students groups.

Demographic data	1st year students in the Faculty of Medicine		3rd year students in the Faculty of Medicine		1st year students in the Faculty of Law	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
The average of age	19,01 ± 1,20		21,03 ± 0,93		18,93 ± 0,96	
<b>Gender</b>						
Female	83	53,2	33	56,9	83	65,4
Male	73	46,8	25	43,1	44	34,6

**TABLE 2:** The distribution of the viewpoints of student groups on the factors which influence the act and the thought of organ donation.

The factors which influence the act and the thought of organ donation.	1st year students in the Faculty of Medicine		3rd year students in the Faculty of Medicine		1st year students in the Faculty of Law	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
	Existence of people who are in need of organ transplantation in their surroundings	12	7.7	7	12.1	8
Thought of helping people in need	75	48.1	26	44.8	85	66.9
Media	21	13.5	3	5.2	11	8.7

a factor in the act and thought of organ donation more than 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Medicine ( $t=3.2511$   $t>1.96$   $p<0.05$ ).

When the students were asked to indicate the motives behind their reluctance to donate organs, and the following results were found (Table 3).

When the students are compared in terms of the motives behind their reluctance to donate organs, it is found out that the anxiety about health deterioration is more dominant among the 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Medicine than 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law ( $t=2.1021$   $t>1.96$   $p<0.05$ ).

The students were asked from whom organ transplantation should be done. The answers are presented in Table 4.

The responses to the question about who should be the donors of organs are evaluated, and it is found out that the belief that the organs provided people whose family consents should be used for transplantation is more dominant among 1<sup>st</sup> year students

in the Faculty of Medicine more than 3<sup>rd</sup> year students in the Faculty of Medicine and 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law (Medicine 1<sup>st</sup> year-Medicine 3<sup>rd</sup> year:  $t=3.6685$   $t>1.96$   $p<0.05$ , Medicine 1<sup>st</sup> year-Law 1<sup>st</sup> year:  $t=2.8179$   $t>1.96$   $p<0.05$ ).

It is found out that 130 1<sup>st</sup> year students of the Faculty of Medicine (83.3%), 44 students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the Faculty of Medicine (75.9%) and 91 students in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the Faculty of Law (71.1%) do not know Law About the Taking, Storing, Grafting and Transplantation of Organs and Tissue, Law no. 2238.

One hundred and twenty three 1<sup>st</sup> year students (78.8%), 47 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (81%) in the Faculty of Medicine and 89 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law (70.1%) state that they will support the decision of a relative who declared consent to organ donation prior to his/her death whereas eight 1<sup>st</sup> year students (5.1%) and three 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (5.2%) in the Faculty of Medicine and nine 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law (7.1%) mention that they will not approve the removal of their or-

**TABLE 3:** The distribution of the viewpoints of student groups on the motives behind their reluctance to donate organs.

Reasons of their reluctance to donate organs	1st year students in the Faculty of Medicine		3rd year students in the Faculty of Medicine		1st year students in the Faculty of Law	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
	Lack of knowledge	42	26.9	12	20.7	37
Religious beliefs	9	5.8	6	10.3	9	7.1
Dissent of family	5	3.2	-	-	8	6.3
Distrust to physicians	4	2.6	1	1.7	5	3.9
Anxiety about improper use of organs	11	7.1	5	8.6	7	5.5
Anxiety that their health will deteriorate	31	19.9	8	13.8	14	11
Their belief that organ transplantation is not an effective treatment method	-	-	1	1.7	3	2.4

**TABLE 4:** The distribution of the viewpoints of students groups from whom organ transplantation should be done.

Organ transplantation should be done from:	1st year students in the		3rd year students in the		1st year students in the	
	Faculty of Medicine		Faculty of Medicine		Faculty of Law	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
People who have the diagnosis of brain death	57	36.5	17	29.3	47	37
Donors who have prior declaration	66	42.3	26	44.8	42	33.1
Dead people whose family consents	77	49.4	14	24.1	42	33.1
Ded people who have no family or relatives	17	10.9	1	1.7	3	2.4

gan(s) in any condition. Twenty nine 1<sup>st</sup> year students (18.6%) and 8 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (13.8%) in the Faculty of Medicine and 34 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law (26.8%) state that they will not oppose to the removal of the organ(s) of a relative who has died.

Attitudes of the students about donating their organs are presented in Table 5.

## DISCUSSION

In a study carried out by Erdoğan et al. in order to identify the viewpoints of Turkish physicians on organ donation and transplantation, it is found out that 122 physicians (39.6%) know where organs are donated.<sup>7</sup>

In our study 40 1<sup>st</sup> year students (25.6%) and 18 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (31.1%) in the Faculty of Medicine and 39 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law (30.7%) state that they know where to donate organs. Our findings are parallel to those of Erdoğan et al. When the schools where they study are taken into consideration, it is clear that most students do not know where organs are donated.

In a study on the Catalan population in Spain carried out by Lopez-Navidad et al., it was stated that nearly whole population was informed

on organ donation and transplantation thanks to mass media, particularly the television.<sup>12</sup>

Rodecki ve Jaccard conclude that the media and cinema which follow and write about and present the process of transplantation may have a significant effect on the society.<sup>6</sup>

In a study carried out by Erdoğan et al., 66 respondents (21,4%) stated that they gained knowledge about organ donation and transplantation through media (television, newspapers, magazines, radio).<sup>7</sup>

In a study carried out by Reddy et al., most respondents referred to the media as the most widespread resource of information about organ donation.<sup>13</sup>

In a study carried out by Keçecioglu et al. most of the donors (51.4%) mentioned that they acquired information on transplantation from the media.<sup>3</sup> In another study of the same scientists the majority (68%) stated that they had learned about transplantation through the media.<sup>14</sup>

We deem our findings compatible with other studies since 21 1<sup>st</sup> year students (13.5%) and three 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (5.2%) in the Faculty of Medicine and 11 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law (8.7%) regard the media as a resource of information on organ donation and transplantation as an ef-

**TABLE 5:** Attitudes of the students about donating their organs.

Attitudes of the students	1st year students in the		3rd year students in the		1st year students in the	
	Faculty of Medicine		Faculty of Medicine		Faculty of Law	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
They could consent to the removal of their organs only after their death	38	24.4	10	17.2	40	31.5
They could only donate certain organs which they approve	30	19.2	13	22.4	17	13.4
They do not consent to donate their organs in any condition	46	29.5	12	20.7	12	9.4

fective factor which influences the act and thought of organ donation. However, the rate of our respondents who uphold the importance of the media is lower compared to other studies.

Traditionally, the request for organ donation has been based on the feeling of human solidarity and altruism, as expressed by catchphrases such as “to donate organs is a gift of life”.<sup>15</sup>

Many religious values which honor human beings require to behave generously towards the ones who are in need. Basu states in his study that religion may encourage willingness to organ donation. Most respondents emphasize that the thought of being helpful to humanity and other people is a source of motivation for willingness (readiness) to organ donation. It is found out that the rate of the acts which are aimed at human beings is 18%. In other words, the values which encourage taking action for the wellbeing of human beings contribute to willingness for organ donation.<sup>6</sup>

In the study of Lopez-Navidad et al. it is stated that donation-transplantation relation is based on solidarity in the form of helping others and saving lives.<sup>12</sup>

Sanner defined one of the motives behind organ donation as altruism (concern for the welfare of others).<sup>16</sup>

In the study of Keçecioglu et al. most donors (82.2%) indicated that they decided to donate their organs to help humanity.<sup>3</sup>

It is consistent with the findings of other studies that in our study 75 1<sup>st</sup> year students (48.1%) and 26 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (44.8%) in the Faculty of Medicine and 85 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law (66.9%) define the thought of helping people in need as a factor which affects the act and thought of organ donation.

In addition to general information on the transplantation process, personal knowledge of donor may result in changes in the opinions about the process. In a study on 595 Toronto residents Basu, Hazariwala and Chipman found out that 22% of the respondents highlighted personal knowledge as a significant factor in willingness to organ donation. A small number of respondents stated that they

donated some parts of their body or had close relatives and friends who were exposed to organ transplantation. This result explains the rate of 22% who are willing to donate their organs.<sup>6</sup>

The findings of our study support the above-mentioned data. Twelve 1<sup>st</sup> year students (7.7%) and 7 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (12.1%) in the Faculty of Medicine, and eight 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law (6.3%) define the existence of people who are in need of organ transplantation in their surroundings as a factor which influences the act and the thought of organ donation.

In a study carried out by Akgün et al. among university students, more than one-third of the respondents (38.2%) stated that they knew about the law on organ donation.<sup>17</sup>

In our study it is found out that 26 1<sup>st</sup> year students the Faculty of Medicine (16,7%), 14 students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the Faculty of Medicine (24,1%) and 36 students in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the Faculty of Law (28.3%) have heard about Law About the Taking, Storing, Grafting and Transplantation of Organs and Tissue, Law no. 2238. It is noticeable that the rate of our respondents who know about the legislation in Turkey is lower than that of the respondents of Akgün et al.’s study, which was also carried out in our country.

In a review where Radecki and Jaccard refer to the psychological aspects of organ donation, they mention that religious beliefs and knowledge have a significant role in people’s willingness to donate their organs after death. The knowledge on the transplantation process which ensures the rebuttal of misunderstandings and wrong beliefs may pave the way for an increase in willingness to organ donation.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, lack of knowledge, misunderstandings about organ donation, religious attitudes and superstitions provoke fear and doubts among people.<sup>13</sup>

In Lopez-Navidad et al.’s study it was found out that the attitudes towards organ donation and transplantation were shaped on the basis of deficient knowledge and personal emotions, and that the knowledge on the medical and legislative aspects on organ donation were very insufficient.<sup>12</sup>



In a study carried out by Akgün et al. among university students, 8,9% of the respondents stated that lack of information on organ donation was one of the reasons behind the reluctance of people to donation.<sup>17</sup>

Even the university students who are subject to a great amount of information exchange and have an important role in the awareness-raising of the society do not have sufficient knowledge on this issue. In a study it was disclosed that university students, regardless of the department where they study, did not have exact and accurate knowledge about the organs which could be transplanted. The evaluation of a survey paper about organ and tissue donation and transplantation administered among factory workers reveals the lack of knowledge about this issue in the working part of the Turkish society.<sup>18</sup>

Evenisko et al. stated that two-thirds of the staff providing care service - which was of critical importance in organ donation and transplantation - did not have sufficient knowledge and training. These scientists and some others emphasize the strong relation between the level of education and knowledge of health care professionals and the rates of organ donation, particularly in the countries where organ demand and donation are serious problems.<sup>8</sup>

In their study conducted among health care professionals in Turkey, Akgün et al. noted that 41.9% of the physicians and 58.9% of the nurses were against organ donation and transplantation due to insufficiency of knowledge about donation.<sup>8</sup>

In a study, public attitudes toward organ donation were investigated by survey in the Turkish community. The investigators suggested that the main reasons for refusal of organ donation are lack of knowledge about transplantation and misinformation regarding organ donation.<sup>3</sup>

It does not contradict with abovementioned studies that in our study 42 1<sup>st</sup> year students (26.9%) and 12 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (20.7%) in the Faculty of Medicine and 37 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law (29.1%) define lack of knowledge as the motive behind their reluctance to donate organs.

In study of Bilgin et al., the study group's argument against organ donation was their concern about inappropriate use of organs (52%).<sup>19</sup>

In Akgün et al.'s study among university students it was detected that one of the reasons behind students' objection to organ donation was the improper use of organs. The rate of students who supported this argument was 22%.<sup>17</sup> In the study carried out by Akgün et al. among health care professionals it was identified that 29.1% of the nurses and 70,9% of the physicians were against organ donation and transplantation due to their doubts about the improper use of organs and tissues.<sup>8</sup>

It is compatible with the abovementioned studies that in our study eleven 1<sup>st</sup> year students (7.1%) and five 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (8.6%) in the Faculty of Medicine and seven 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law (5.5%) define their anxiety about improper use of organs as the motive behind their reluctance to donate organs.

In Akgün et al.'s study, 22% of the students explained that they refused to donate their organs due to their anxiety about deformation of their body.<sup>17</sup> In the same scientists' study, among health care professionals 20.9% of the physicians and 79.1% of the nurses stated that they opposed to organ donation and transplantation because of their anxiety about deformation of body.<sup>8</sup>

In Joun et al.'s study 22.2% of the respondents, and in Bilgel et al.'s study 31.7% of the respondents mentioned that they were against organ donation because of their anxiety about deformation of body.<sup>20,21</sup>

In our study, 1.9% of the 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Medicine, 13.8% of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year students in the Faculty of Medicine and 11% of the 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law expressed that they did not consent to organ or tissue donation due to their anxiety about deformation of the body. These findings are compatible with other studies.

The consent of family is a determining factor in accepting or rejecting organ donation.<sup>22</sup> In the study of Lopez-Navidad et al. it was observed that many young people were willing to talk to their families about organ donation and transplantation and the vice versa.<sup>12</sup>

The findings of our study support the above-mentioned data. Five 1<sup>st</sup> year students (3.2%) and 8 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law (6.3%) define the dissent of their family as a determining factor in their refusal of organ donation.

The Islamic religion honors death, but also upholds human beings and life; and deems the protection of life as one of the fundamental objectives of a religion.

In the Islamic religion there exist verses which mean “anyone who spares a life, it shall be as if he spared the lives of all the people” (5-The Feast/32) and “you shall cooperate in matters of righteousness and responsibility” (5-The Feast/2) as well as hadiths which order and recommend cooperation, solidarity, self-sacrifice.<sup>23</sup>

In a study, the vast majority of religious Turkish people claimed that organ donation was an honorable humane act which was acceptable according to Islamic beliefs.<sup>14</sup> The Supreme Board of Religious Affairs stated by its decision dated March 6, 1980, that organ transplantation is lawful. Only 10% of religious Turkish people believed that harvesting and donation were not worthy of merit in eyes of Islam, and they were not in favor of donation.<sup>21</sup>

In the study of Akgün et al. among university students, 8.9% of the respondents, and in their study among health care professionals, 19.7% of the physicians and 80.3 of the nurses and in the study of Bilgel et al. 16.1% of the respondents stated that they were against organ donation because of their religious beliefs.<sup>8,17,21</sup>

In a study carried out by Erdoğan et al. five respondents (5.5%) mentioned that they were opposed to organ donation because they believed that it did not comply with the rules of the Islam.<sup>7</sup>

In our study, nine 1<sup>st</sup> year students (5.8%) and six 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (10.3%) in the Faculty of Medicine and nine 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law (7.1%) state that they do not think of donating their organs due to their religious beliefs, which supports the findings of other studies. Religious beliefs continue to be a barrier to organ donation.

In the study of Reddy et al. 29% of the respondents stated that they would consent to donate the organs of a dead relative.<sup>13</sup>

In the study of Lopez-Navidad et al. 75% of the population stated that they would consent to donate all or some of the organs of a death relative.<sup>12</sup>

In our study 29 1<sup>st</sup> year students (18.6%) and eight 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (13.8%) in the Faculty of Medicine and 34 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law (26.8%) state that they will not oppose to the removal of organ(s) of their relative who has died.

In the study of Erdoğan et al., 92 respondents (29.8%) mentioned that they would not donate the organs of their dead relatives.<sup>7</sup>

In Sanner’s study, it was observed that few people develop positive attitudes towards the donation of the organs of their dead relatives.<sup>16</sup>

In our study eight 1<sup>st</sup> year students (5.1%) and three 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (5.2%) in the Faculty of Medicine and nine 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law (7.1%) mention that they will not consent to the removal of their relatives’ organ(s) in any condition. Since the rates in our findings are lower compared to other studies, it can be concluded that students develop a more positive attitude towards this issue.

In the study of Erdoğan et al. 20 respondents (21.7%) stated that their relatives had to consent to the donation of their organs prior to their death.<sup>7</sup>

In our study 123 1<sup>st</sup> year students (78.8%) and 47 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (81%) in the Faculty of Medicine and 89 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law (70.1%) state that they will support the decision of a dead relative who has declared prior consent to organ donation. The higher rate of supporting organ donation compared to the study of Erdoğan et al. reveals that students uphold the right of individuals on their own body.

In the study of Lopez-Navidad et al., majority of the population (85%) consent to the removal of all or some of the organs after the death of a person.<sup>12</sup>

In the study carried out by Akgün et al. among university students, 49.5% of 275 students decla-

red that they were willing to donate their organs after they died.<sup>17</sup>

In study of Sanner, 50% of the students indicated that they were willing to donate their organs after death.<sup>24</sup>

In our study 38 1<sup>st</sup> year students (24.4%) and 10 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (17.2%) in the Faculty of Medicine and 40 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law (31,5%) state that they could donate their organs after death. It is noticeable that students are less willing to donate their organs after death compared to other researches.

In study of Joun et al., thirty-six percent of respondents are not willing to donate organs for transplantation.<sup>20</sup>

In the study of Bilgel et al. 180 respondents (18.3%) stated that they were not willing to donate their organs.<sup>21</sup>

It does not contradict with the findings of these studies that 46 1<sup>st</sup> year students (29.5%) and 12 3<sup>rd</sup> year students (20.7%) in the Faculty of Medicine and 12 1<sup>st</sup> year students in the Faculty of Law (9.4%) state that they do not consent to donate their organs in any condition.

## CONCLUSION

It is observed that most of the students who filled in the questionnaire do not know where organs are donated and have not heard about Law About the Taking, Storing, Grafting and Transplantation of Organs and Tissue, Law no. 2238, when the faculties where they study are taken into consideration.

Moreover, nearly one-fourth of the students define lack of knowledge as the first cause for the

decision to refuse organ donation. It is identified that students' attitudes towards organ donation and transplantation are shaped on the basis of personal emotions, and that they do not have sufficient medical and legal knowledge about this issue.

Despite the insufficiency of medical and legal knowledge, since the thought of helping people who are in need is among the first factors which influence the decision of organ donation, it is clear that the values which uphold human beings contribute to willingness to organ donation.

Like in many other studies, it is observed in our study that the media is a source of information on organ donation and transplantation, and an effective factor in encouraging donation. Hence, the transfer of exact and accurate information to the public through the media will certainly contribute to raise awareness and increase the rates of donation in the society.

Since most students state that they will support the decision of a dead relative who declared prior consent to organ donation, it is understood that students do know and uphold "the right of individuals to decide on their own body".

Since some students mention that they are opposed to organ donation because of their religious beliefs-though their number is low-uncovers that religious beliefs continue to be an obstacle to organ donation.

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