Author's response to reviews

Title: Attitudes to kidney donation among primary care patients in rural Crete, Greece

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Title: Attitudes to kidney donation among primary care users in rural Crete, Greece

New title: Attitudes to kidney donation among primary care patients in rural Crete, Greece

Author(s): Emmanouil K Symvoulakis, Ioannis D Komninos, Nikos Antonakis, Myfanwy Morgan, Athanasios Alegakis, Emmanouil Tsafantakis, Marios Chatziarsenis, Anastas Philalithis and Roger Jones

Dear editor

We would like to submit the revised manuscript, newly entitled “Attitudes to kidney donation among primary care patients in rural Crete, Greece”, which has been corrected in response to the reviewers comments. We have also, undertaken editing and formatting changes.

All co-authors have read and approved the revised manuscript.

We would like to thank the reviewers for their helpful comments which we believe have considerably strengthened the paper

We are looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Emmanouil K. Symvoulakis
Point by point reply to:

Reviewer's report (1)

Reviewer’s comment:
The only problem is the generalization of these results to the other countries.

Author’s comment:
We clarified this point by rephrasing the concluding paragraph of the discussion section. Please see more details below.

Reviewer's report (2)

Major Compulsory Revisions

Reviewer’s comment:
Authors come to their conclusions based on a statistical analysis in which the attitudes of 5 persons willing to donate organs are compared to the attitudes of 219 non-donors. Statistical analysis to determine independent predictors of those 5 registered donors may have introduced a type I error. This may obviously have affected the validity of the statistical analysis and should be reviewed by a statistician. At a minimum, the risk of a Type I error in this study should be discussed in the study limitation section.

Author’s comment:

The statistical analysis that we used was not clearly presented, and this has now been revised in the text. The comparison was not between five registered donors and the others, but for each item of the questionnaire in relation to the socio-demographic factors. Odds Ratios were also estimated for location after adjusting for age, sex, religion, education and occupation.

Minor essential revisions
Reviewer's comment:
The phrasing of the questionnaire questions, although used in the past by other researchers, generates some concerns as well. For instance, “Donation after death” is not a truthful descriptor of either heart-beating or non-heart beating organ donation. If distorted beliefs and negative attitudes need correction, it should certainly be done on the basis of open dialogue, full disclosure of facts, and without the use of any biased terminology. This is particularly important, as the authors postulate, when people with lower levels of education are to be targeted.

Author’s comment:
Although the questionnaire has been used previously (reference 4 in the manuscript), in some cases the wording may be considered simplified (e.g. “donation after death” does not distinguish between heart beating and non-heart beating organ donation). On the other hand, this may be appropriate in view of the complexity of the issues. A comment has been added in the discussion.

Reviewer’s comment:
The study by Symvoulakis et al conveys that 2 subsets of primary care patients visiting their PCP during March and May 2007 have similar levels of negative attitudes toward organ donation as the rest of the European community; an issue that must be addressed using the same corrective strategies to shape beliefs and general opinions on organ donation: increased marketing, education and information campaigns. This study claims that the level of knowledge is one determinant in attitude about organ donation. The study confirms that higher educated persons are less likely to have a negative attitude toward organ donation.

Author’s comment:
We were careful not to generalise our conclusions to a national level, and the wording of the sentence stating this (in the discussion) has been changed. We introduced the comment: “The results of this study, carried out in a specific population, are not generalisable to the whole of Greece”. It is worth noting, however, that our results are comparable to those of the national sample that replied to the Eurobarometer survey.
Reviewer’s comment:
One interesting finding that the authors did not expand on is that despite the prevalence of a negative attitude toward organ donation, 66.1% of study participants would not oppose presumed consent. These appear to be contradictory positions in this particular study population.

Author’s comment:
The apparent contradiction between the positive responses to registering as a donor, with or without a donor card (45.7% and 49.6%) and accepting presumed consent (66.7%) may be explained by the fact that the latter does not involve any specific action by the respondent. This comment has been introduced in the discussion.

Reviewer’s comment:

Some editorial comments:
Page 1: The authors may want to consider changing the title and delete the term “primary care users.” I would suggest replacing it with “primary care patients.”
Page 2: Two rural primary care units on the island……..Replace with: Two rural primary care centers on the island of Crete. (use “centers” throughout the manuscript)*.
Negative attitudes to registration as a donor involve much more……..Consider changing to: Changing negative attitudes to registration as a donor involves much more than overcoming one barrier……..
Page 6: Rephrase or clarify “urgent medical conditions patients with cognitive or mood disorders.” Do the authors mean: emergent care patients and patients with cognitive and mood disorders?
Page 8: immigrants permanently resident in Greece…………replace with: immigrants permanently residing in Greece.
Page 11: This reviewer is not sure what is meant by “reliability of consent and donation procedures.” Do authors mean the “integrity” of consent and donation authorization procedures?
Page 12: Correct typo: “desirable” instead of “desiderable”
Page 13: ……type of donation, live or cadaveric. Change into: type of donation, i.e. living or cadaveric organ donation.

Page 15: Policy developers…………….by increasing donation consent rates in the future. This conclusive sentence is unclear. Do authors mean: ……..can be reversed for the purpose of increasing organ donation consent rates in the future.

Author’s comment:

We considered your suggestions and we made the proper changes.

*Specific terms for each primary care setting involved, were used in alignment with the affiliation detailing.