

Attitudes Toward VCA Transplantation and Donation: Challenges and Opportunities

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- Consultant, Altarum and HRSA, 2023-Present
 - 2024 National Survey of Organ Donation Attitudes and Practices
 - Includes VCA donation questions

My Data Sources (HRSA-Funded)

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Original Clinical Science—General



Vascularized Composite Allograft Donation and Transplantation: A Survey of Public Attitudes in the United States

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Introduction

Vascularized composite allograft (VCA) transplantation
has emerged worldwide as a groundbreaking intervention
to return identity and function to individuals affected by

Attitudes Toward Organ, Tissue, and Vascularized Composite Allograft (VCA) Donation and Transplantation: A Survey of United States Military Veterans

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Amanda Calvo, BS,¹ Bohdan Pomahac, MD,^{3,4} Robert Zwolak, MD,^{5,6} Namrata Krishnan, MD,^{7,8}
and James R. Rodrigue, PhD^{1,4}

FINAL REPORT

Date: September 30, 2023
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Registration and VCA Donation Willingness in
Veterans
Grantee: Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
Boston, Massachusetts
PI: James R. Rodrigue, PhD

Organ Donation and Procurement



OPEN

Video Messaging to Increase Vascularized Composite Allograft Donation Willingness in United States Military Veterans

James R. Rodrigue, PhD,^{1,2} Jessica Shenkel, BA,¹ Matthew Boger, MS,³ Bohdan Pomahac, MD,⁴
and Aaron Fleishman, MPH^{1,2}

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Donor Services**
Organ and Tissue Donation

Other Data Sources

Public Perceptions and Information Needs of VCA Transplantation and Donation: A Mixed Methods Study

Alexander Ferzola¹, Jefferson Uriarte², Hannah C. Sung¹, Naomi Anderson², Carolyn Sidoti³, Sarah E. Van Pilsum Rasmussen¹, Max Downey³, Karen B. Vanterpool³, Whitney Langlee¹, Samantha Klitenic³, Lisa Young¹, Carisa M. Cooney⁴, Ieesha Johnson⁵, Allison Coleman⁵, Jaimie T. Shores⁴, Dorry L. Segev^{1,3}, Gerald Brandacher⁴, Elisa J. Gordon^{2,6} and Macey L. Levan^{1,3*}

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RESEARCH PAPER

Vascularized Composite Allotransplantation 1:1-2, 22-30; October/November/December 2014; © 2014 Taylor & Francis Group, LLC

Attitudes Toward Vascularized Composite Allotransplantation of the Hands and Face in an Urban Population

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National Survey of Organ Donation Attitudes and Practices, 2019

Report of Findings | Issue Date: February 2020



The Public Face of Transplantation: The Potential of Education to Expand the Face Donor Pool

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Background: Despite the growing success of facial transplantation, organ donor shortages remain challenging. Educational health campaigns can effectively inform the general public and institute behavioral modifications. A brief educational introduction to facial transplantation may positively influence the public's position on facial donation.

Methods: The authors anonymously surveyed 300 participants, gathering basic demographic information, donor registration status, awareness of facial transplantation, and willingness to donate solid organs and facial allografts. Two-hundred of these participants were presented an educational video and subsequently resurveyed on facial donation. Factorial parametric analyses were performed to compare exposure responses before and after watching video exposure.

Results: Among participants completing the survey alone (control group), 49



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Organ and Tissue Donation

Strong Support for VCA Transplantation

- Support (>90%) is similar to that of traditional organ transplantation
 - Strongest support for extremity and uterus transplantation
- However, much less willing to personally undergo VCA transplantation, if needed, compared to traditional organ transplantation

Traditional Organ Donation Willingness

- 65% to 78% want to be organ donors
 - ~50% registered as organ donors
 - 15% to 28% want organs donated upon death but are not registered
- Very little variability by organ type
- Substantial differences by race/ethnicity and sex

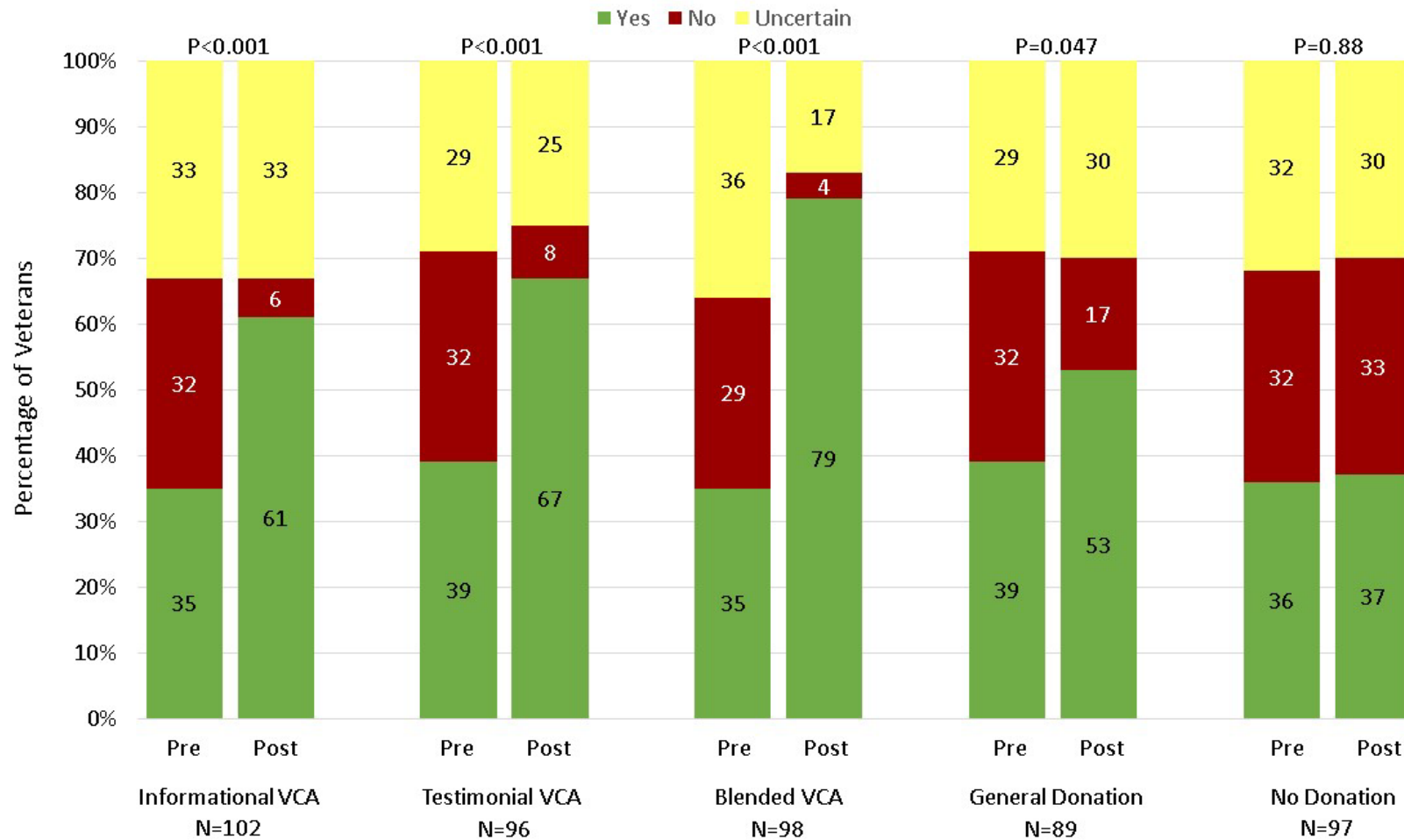
VCA Donation Willingness

- 35% to 80% are willing to be VCA donors
 - Huge variability based on population surveyed
 - Similar proportion willing to donate VCA organs of deceased family member
- Race/ethnicity differences
- Substantial variability by VCA type

Specific VCA Donation Willingness

- Upper and lower extremities – 64% to 81%
 - Uterus – 60% to 77%
 - Genitourinary [Penile] – 44% to 61%
 - Face – 34% to 58%
-
- Overall, this represents high public willingness to donate VCA organs
 - These rates exceed those for traditional organ donation in the early stages of traditional organ transplantation

Educational Interventions Increase VCA Donation Willingness



Empathy arousal is essential for activating strongest attitude change, especially when combined with factual information

Common Reasons for Unwillingness to Donate VCA Organs

- Identity loss
- Not wanting family members to “see” body part on another person (vs. traditional organs, which are internal)
- Mutilation / Unable to have open casket funeral
- Vague psychological discomfort
- Difficulty understanding the medical “purpose” or necessity of VCA transplantation

Opportunities

- There is public appetite for more information about VCA transplantation and donation
 - 30% to 50% want to learn more about it after being given minimal information
- Blended messaging (information + testimonials) show excellent promise for increasing favorable VCA attitudes and donation willingness
- Concerns about VCA messaging eroding support for traditional organ donation have not been realized

Challenges

- Limited media exposure (~35% or fewer)
 - Higher exposure near VCA transplant programs
- More favorable VCA attitudes among those with more trust in transplant and donation systems
 - Emerging evidence that this trust may be eroding for organ donation generally
- Much lower VCA support among Black Americans
 - May limit VCA transplant access for Black patients

Challenges

- Confusion re organs included when in donor registry and VCA donation authorization process
- Veteran-specific confusion about donation authorization
- Existing VCA educational resources have critical deficiencies



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

**Public education materials about Vascular Composite
Allotransplantation and donation in the United States:
Current scope and limitations**

Sarah E. Van Pilsum Rasmussen, Jefferson Uriarte, Naomi Anderson, Brianna Doby, Alexander Ferzola, Hannah Sung, Carisa Cooney, Gerald Brandacher, Elisa Gordon, Dorry L. Segev, Macey L. Henderson ✉

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