

Public service announcement as a tool for building trust in organ donation

A.A. Anisimov^{✉1,2}, A.R. Abdullina², A.T. Raimova¹, Yu.A. Anisimov^{3,4}

¹*Kazan State Medical University,*

49 Butlerov St., Kazan 420012 Russia;

²*Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University,*

18 Kremlevskaya St., Kazan 420008 Russia;

³*N.V. Sklifosovsky Research Institute for Emergency Medicine,*

3 Bolshaya Sukharevskaya Sq., Moscow 129090 Russia;

⁴*A.I. Yevdokimov Moscow State University of Medicine and Dentistry,*

20 Bldg. 1 Delegatskaya St., Moscow 127473 Russia

✉Corresponding author: Andrei A. Anisimov, Assistant of the Forensic Medicine

Department, Kazan State Medical University; Senior Lecturer at Department of Emergency Medicine and Simulation Medicine, Institute of Fundamental Medicine and Biology, Kazan

(Volga Region) Federal University, aa_anisimov@bk.ru

Abstract

Rationale. *In developed countries, public service announcement has long been a universal tool for diagnosing and correcting social behavior, including the donor activity increase. Considering the existing organ donation popularization inertia in Russia, the review of positive foreign public service announcement examples has a high scientific and practical relevance.*

Aim. *To study the world examples of organ donation public service announcement.*

Material and methods. *We reviewed public service announcement products of donor organizations from Spain, Portugal, Italy, the Vatican,*

Belgium, Argentina, Brazil, France, Germany, Singapore, and Japan. We assessed the popularization of organ donation in Russia and highlighted the ways for its improvement.

Conclusion. *Organ donation public service announcement are widely used both in "Opt In" and "Opt Out" countries and have a high potential for forming a positive public opinion in the Russian Federation. In Russia, the activities aimed at promoting organ donation are insufficient, there is a need to scale it up. In this regard, independent non-profit organizations with the necessary professional staff and marketing competencies can be considered as reliable partners for the government in conducting educational work on organ donation, in particular, in the public service announcement implementation.*

Keywords: organ donation, transplantation, public service announcement

Conflict of interests Authors declare no conflict of interest

Financing The study was supported by the Grant from the International Scientific Council for Young Scientists of the Kazan State Medical University

For citation: Anisimov AA, Abdullina AR, Raimova AT, Anisimov YuA. Public service announcement as a tool for building trust in organ donation. *Transplantologiya. The Russian Journal of Transplantation*. 2023;15(2):226–237. (In Russ.). <https://doi.org/10.23873/2074-0506-2023-15-2-226-237>

BNAOT, Brazilian National Association for Organ Transplantation

IRODaT, International Registry in Organ Donation and Transplantation

MM, mass media

NABA, New Academy of Fine Arts (Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti Milano [Italian])

PSA, public service announcement

Introduction

The problem of organizing transplant care in the Russian Federation still keeps its relevance: more than 9,000 people are on the waiting list for donor organs, and this number continues growing [1–2]. Despite the “pre-Covid” trend of increasing the number of organ transplantations in the country by 10–15% per year, Russia lags far behind the leading countries of the world in many transplant aspects, primarily in the number of transplant operations performed annually [3]. So, according to the *International Registry in Organ Donation and Transplantation (IRODaT)* for 2020, Russia, with a number of 3.92 posthumous donors per 1 million of population, ranks only the 47th in the list of all countries providing organ transplantations [4].

In 2021, 2,318 transplants were performed in the country, or 15.9 per 1 million people. At the same time, Russian Healthcare system faces the ambitious goal of increasing the number of organ transplants to 25.2 per 1 million of population by 2024; the number of regions, in which transplants are performed, up to 42; and the number of transplantation centers up to 80 [2, 5].

The basis for ensuring the growth in the number of organs harvested for transplantation, and, consequently, the progress of transplantation in general is a developed organ donation system. World experience shows that it is possible to ensure a high level of universal support for donation only through comprehensive explanatory work with the population about the principles of this medical branch, the highly humane and noble gift of a deceased person to a patient in need [6, 7]. The open demonstration of the transplantation activity results has a particularly pronounced effect. Thus, the heroic story of Nicholas Green in 1994 became a real phenomenon and gave a powerful impetus to the

development of transplantation in Italy, revolutionizing the attitude of society towards this problem [8].

Today, in the era of digital technologies, public service advertising actively acts as a key tool for building a trusting attitude of citizens towards organ donation, which has a psychological (personal, emotional, rational) impact on the target audience, thereby allowing the listeners to think and make their own choice regarding the future of their organs during life, without shifting this burden to loved ones in the event of sudden passing [9, 10].

Given the inertia in Russia in the issue of promoting organ donation, a review of positive foreign examples of public service announcements is of high scientific and practical interest.

Based on the foregoing, **the aim** of this study was to review the world experience in the implementation of public service advertising on the topic of organ donation.

Material and methods

The authors made an analytical review of public service announcement products of donor organizations around the world. The most successful examples, according to the authors' opinion, have been demonstrated. The activities on promoting the organ donation in Russia are highlighted and public service advertising is assessed as a tool for its improvement.

Results

According to Russian legislation, public service advertising is information distributed in any way, in any form and using any means, addressed to an indefinite circle of people and aimed at achieving charitable and other socially useful goals, as well as ensuring the interests

of the state [11]. Abroad, the terms *public service advertising* and *public service announcement* (PSA) are used to refer to such advertising. It is based on an idea that has a certain social value. The purpose of this type of advertising is to change the attitude of citizens to the existing problem, and in the long term, to create other social values in society [12]. In developed countries, public service advertising has long been a universal tool for diagnosing and correcting the behavior of society, including in matters of increasing donor activity [13–15].

For more than 25 years, Spain has been the leader in transplant ratings with the rate of 40.8 organ donors per million people and up to 5,000 transplantations annually [16]. According to the Spaniards, purposeful activities focused on public awareness through cooperation with the media have made it possible to achieve high performance in this branch. One example is the posters with the slogan "Regala La Vida" (*Eng.* Give the Gift of Life) created by "UnitedFakes" that were distributed to young people (Fig. 1A, B, C).

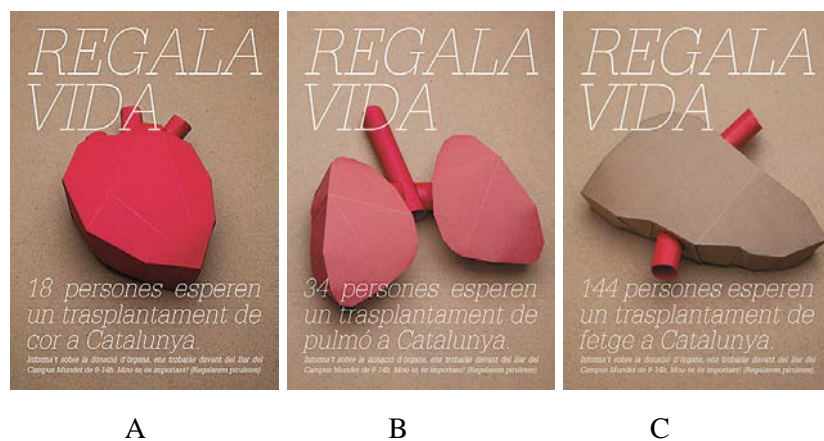


Fig. 1. A, B, C, Campaign posters "Give the Gift of Life", Spain

Spain is a very religious country. The support of the Spanish Church for organ donation, on the one hand, provides spiritual support for

the process of organ explantation in the hospital, and on the other hand, it allows such public service announcements to be widely replicated without fear of condemnation from the religious community (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. “Leave your organs down. Thanks”, Spain

As a result, it took only a few years for Spain to increase the number of donors from 14 people per million of population in 1998 to 35 in 2005. This figure continues to grow steadily, firmly establishing Spain in the list of leaders in the global transplant community [16, 17].

Speaking about the support from the Catholic Church, one cannot help mentioning the work that the Vatican is doing to popularize organ donation. According to the catechism of the Catholic Church, posthumous organ donation is considered a noble and worthy act, and it should be perceived as an expression of universal solidarity [18]. In addition, Pope Francis personally supports organ donation by taking part in public events and emphasizing the importance of developing a culture of donation in order to protect and give life [19]. Perhaps this is also why transplantation is so well-developed in Catholic countries (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4A, B, C).

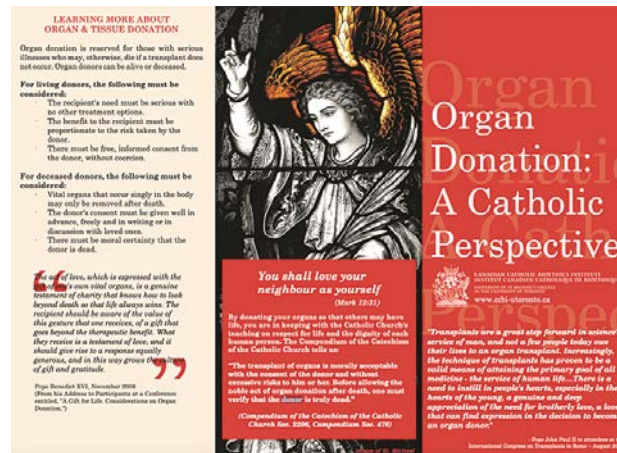
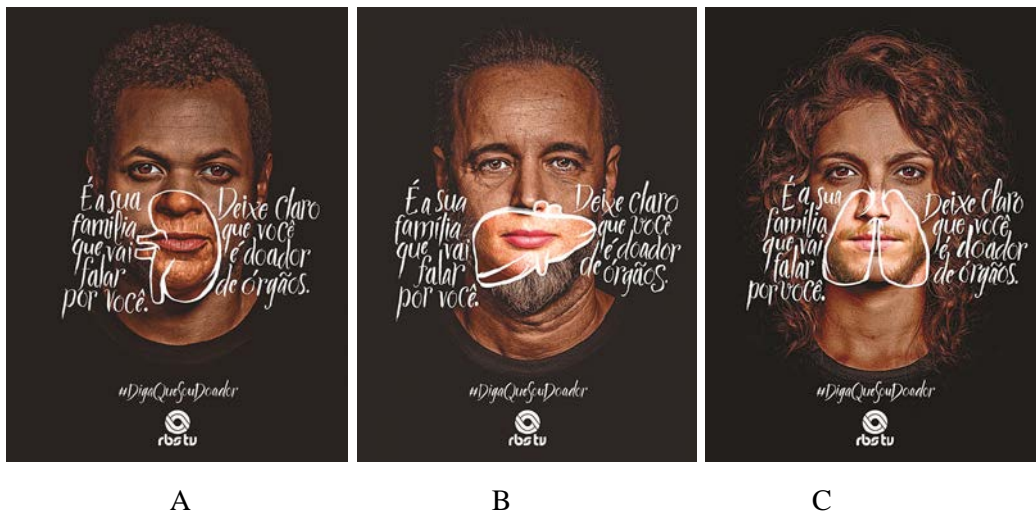


Fig. 3. Brochure "Organ Donation: A Catholic Perspective", Canada



A

B

C

Fig. 4: A, B, C, Campaign posters "Say that you are a donor", Portugal

In Italy, the birthplace of the arts, painting was taken as a tool to attract public attention. The print public service advertising was created for the Italian charity AIDO. The advertising campaign was called "The Missing Piece" and was intended to encourage people to pay more attention to the problem of the shortage of donor organs. The posters show well-known paintings – Van Gogh's self-portrait and Mona Lisa, in which the “missing” element is added (Fig. 5A, B). The canvases are complemented by the slogan "Everyone needs something". The campaign

was conceived by students from the New Academy of Fine Arts in Milan (NABA, *Ital.*: Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti Milano), who explained their idea as an attempt to convey a serious message with humor.

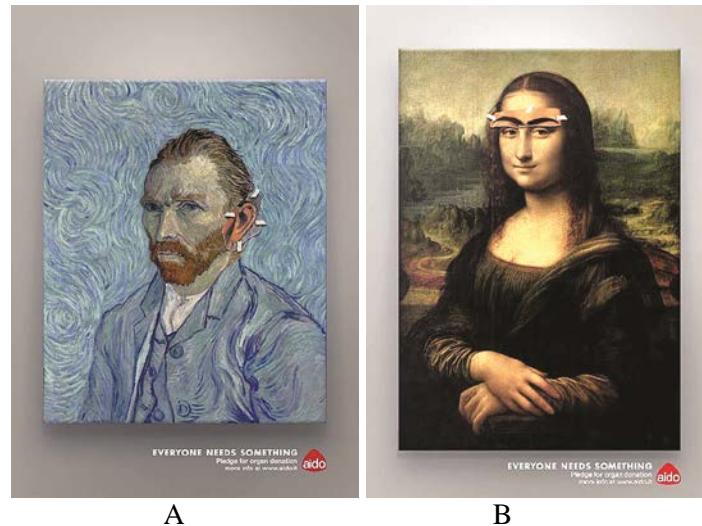


Fig. 5. A, B, Campaign posters "Everyone needs something", Italy

The popularization of organ donation with humor, is also treated in Belgium. So, the non-profit organization "Reborn to be Alive" used incidental photos, accompanying them with black humor: "Eight of his organs can be donated. Luckily for us, his brain is not one of them" (Fig. 6A). The advertising campaign has other examples that are focused on fans of the TV series. On the back of the Belgian newspaper *De Standaard*, there is a picture of a patient sitting in a wheelchair with a sword in his hand while waiting for a transplant. The public service ad is a direct reference to the poster of the popular TV series *Game of Thrones* and the unequivocal message "He is waiting to receive new lungs. Without an organ donation he might not live to see series finale" (Fig. 6B).



Fig. 6. A, B, Campaign posters "Reborn to be alive", Belgium

On the contrary, public service advertising in Latin America has been approached with the utmost seriousness. The Argentinian Foundation of Liver Transplant (FATH, *Spanish*: La Fundación Argentina de Transplante Hepático) with the participation of an Argentine artist organized an exhibition on the streets of Buenos Aires, where the main exhibits were the "organs" wrapped in black garbage bags (Fig. 7A, B, C). The exhibition was accompanied by the message "This is where non-donated organs end up. Do not throw away life - become a donor". As the authors admit, such an unusual, even “hard” submission format worked, making many people think about posthumous donation. The Exhibition visitors immediately reacted and spread the hashtag in social media #StopTrashPlant (Stop wasting life), thereby demonstrating to the environment their willingness to become a donor. Thus, the Argentinian example shows that public service announcements that provoke negative associative series can be effective in their own way.



Fig. 7. A, B, C, Campaign posters "Stop wasting life", Argentina

The Brazilian National Association for Organ Transplantation (BNAOT) glorifies the image of the donor through public service announcements. Advertising from the agency "Leo Burnett Brazil" shows that it is not necessary to work, for example, as a firefighter to save people: “You can do the same. Become an organ donor. Save seven lives” (Fig. 8A, B).



Fig. 8. A, B, Campaign posters "You can do the same", Brazil

At the same time, work is being done with young people. Brazilian artist Marcel Fukuwara has designed a public service announcement that associates an organ donor with his favorite cartoon superheroes: Spider-

Man and Superman. “The real power is in you” is the motto of the installation (Fig. 9A, B).

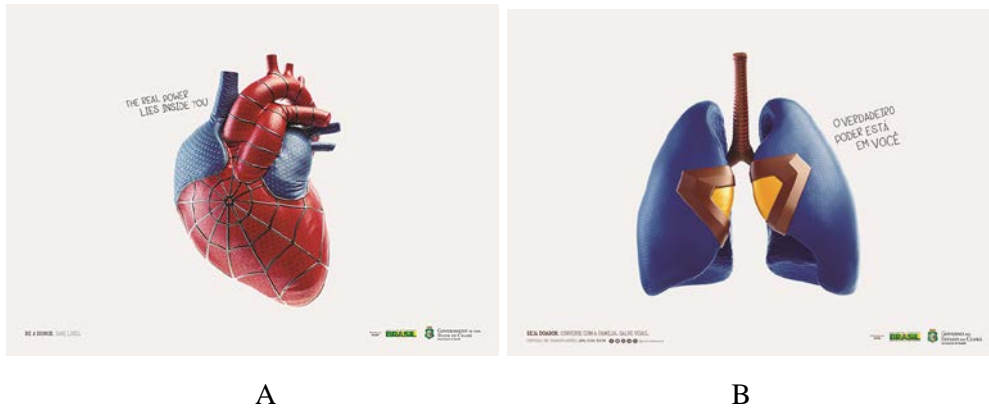


Fig. 9. A, B, Campaign posters "The real power is in you", Brazil

A more realistic approach to glorification was taken in France. If in other countries, by and large, public service announcements try to avoid direct associations with death, in France they used a reference to an accident with an unfavorable outcome: “You can be a hero after death. Become an organ donor” (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10. Public service announcement "You can be a hero after death", France

An interesting idea of personifying the problem of organ donation was implemented in Germany. By depicting a map of the city in the form

of an organ, the authors of the announcement were able to unite their viewers on a geographical basis: “People are waiting for life in your town too. Become an organ donor” (Fig. 11).

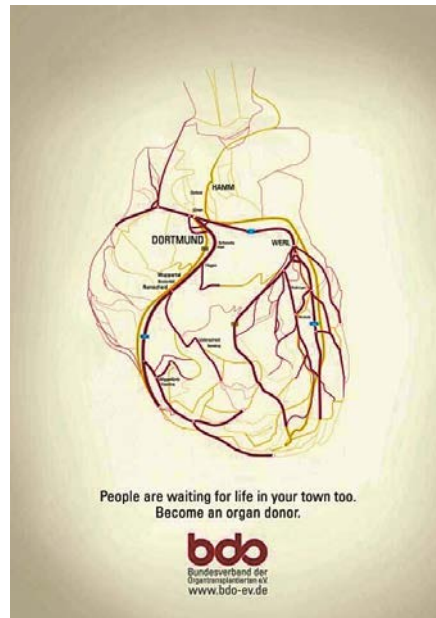


Fig. 11. Public service announcement "People are waiting for life in your town too", Germany

In Singapore, where about 500 people are waiting for organ transplants, donor public service advertising has been linked to environmental issues. Taking into account the active citizenship of eco-advocates, the Singapore non-profit organization "Live On" together with the Ministry of Health drew a parallel between a donor organ and clothes that can be passed on to those who need it: "Extend the life. Pass it on to someone" (Fig. 12 A, B, C). Such an ideological symbiosis, on the one hand, gives an everyday shade to a practice that is inextricably linked with death, and on the other hand, connects the donor and the recipient, resonating with a sense of the continuation of life.



Fig. 12. A, B, C, Campaign posters "Live on, pass it on to someone", Singapore

In Japan, they approached the topic with childish spontaneity. In order to draw attention to the problem, the agency "Dentsu" implemented a public service announcement project "Second Life Toys", which gives a second life to old damaged children's toys, "transplanting" them with body parts from other toys (Fig. 13). Returning to life through a "special" operation is a metaphor for transplantation, which gently and creatively forms a humane attitude towards it from an early age and encourages the Japanese population to donate organs.



Fig. 13. Public service announcement "Second life for toys", Japan

Discussion

This study presents only a small part of interesting, according to the authors, examples of public service announcement on the topic of organ donation. It should be noted that among the countries that are actively campaigning with the population, both legally proclaimed donor models (Opt In/Opt Out) are represented, which indicates the effectiveness of increasing the loyalty of citizens to transplantation, regardless of whether they will have to enter the donor registry or not.

We consider it positive that specialized non-profit structures are engaged in the development of public service announcement content, and the medical community acts only as an academic (methodological) partner in its preparation. This, on the one hand, ensures the independence of donor decisions from specific transplant centers, and on the other hand, relieves transplantologists of an additional social burden, freeing up time for direct professional duties. Moreover, the level of the information materials developed by a professional marketer, from an advertising point of view, will always be of high quality and resonate with the layman, in contrast to medical human resources, which often scare the viewer away with dryness, naturalism, or inappropriate cynicism.

A great help in the development of the transplantation branch is the church. Its support and the involvement of the church in information programs certainly contribute to the growth of understanding of "life after death" among the population, which cannot but consolidate the leadership positions of Catholic countries in transplant ratings. In this regard, the involvement of world religions in the discussion of donor programs has a high potential in Russia, especially taking into account its inter-confessional, multinational composition and numerous clergy.

Today, in our country, the state is working to popularize organ donation among the population. However, due to objective reasons, it is insufficient, often episodic, and often limited geographically. The National Medical Research Center for Transplantology and Artificial Organs named after Academician V.I. Shumakov make efforts to arrange mass media campaigns (for example, “One hundred questions to a transplantologist”), exhibitions, press conferences, as well as educational talks about the basics of transplantology with students of secondary general education and higher educational institutions. There is also an official resource of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation “Organ Donor = Donor of Lives”, which contains up-to-date news, statistics and patient stories.

At the same time, the non-profit sector represented by organizations and projects, which in one form or another form a positive attitude towards organ donation, attracts attention. The public organization “NEFRO-LIGA” unites people with kidney diseases who are on dialysis therapy and after transplantation. The charitable organization “*Native Atmosphere*” helps those who need a lung transplant. *The Life Like a Miracle Charitable Foundation* provides support to children who have undergone and are awaiting liver transplantation. The *RusTransplant Association* forms a Russian-speaking transplant community; and activists from *TransplantSportRus* organize sports events throughout the country: football tournaments, swimming championships, marathons, and even All-Russian Transplant Games. Since 2020, in Tatarstan, the authors of this study have been implementing the information project “Donate Life Russia”; within its framework the educational lectures and panel discussions are held at the leading public venues of the republic [20]. Of course, each of the organizations has its own focus and target audience, but all of them are

united in a common desire to develop a transplant service and can be considered as reliable partners for the state in their educational efforts in organ donation promotion among the population in the Russian Federation.

Despite the fact that in our country public service advertising is actually a young phenomenon that has not yet been used in the context of transplantation, in recent years it has confidently proven itself in solving the preventive tasks of the healthcare system, in particular in the fight against HIV/AIDS, diabetes, alcoholism, in the development of blood and blood component donation [21, 22]. Unfortunately, in practice, this option of attracting attention still causes skepticism among some of the Russian health authorities; and such initiatives are often funded on a residual basis. Nevertheless, public anti-vaccination sentiments in Russian society during the pandemic of a new coronavirus infection COVID-19 convincingly showed the insufficiency of solely the administrative resource used for campaigning purposes, and the need for a wide development of information tools, in particular, public service announcements, in order to actively involve the population in the solution of medical, social and demographic tasks of national importance.

According to Prof. M.Sh. Khubutiya, the Chief External Transplantation Expert of Moscow, Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences, no medical industry is so much dependent on public opinion as transplantology [23]. The available international experience convincingly shows that, with due attention, competent public service announcement on the topic of organ donation can become a reliable tool for forming a positive public opinion in the Russian Federation, as well.

Conclusion

Public service announcements on the subject of organ donation are widely used both in countries with a proclaimed "presumed consent" and "presumed dissent", and have a high potential for forming a positive public opinion in the Russian Federation

In Russia, the activities to promote organ donation have been insufficient, there is a need to scale them up. In this regard, independent non-profit organizations with the relevant professional staff and marketing competencies can be considered as reliable partners for the state when taking the educational measures on the topic of organ donation for the population, in particular, when implementing public service advertising.

References

1. Khubutiya MSh. (ed.) *Transplantatsiya organov i tkaney v mnogoprofil'nom nauchnom tsentre*. Moscow: AirArt Publ.; 2011. (In Russ.).
2. Prikaz Ministerstva zdravookhraneniya RF ot 4 iyunya 2019 g. N 365 "Ob utverzhdenii vedomstvennoy tselevoy programmy "Donorstvo i transplantatsiya organov v Rossiyskoy Federatsii". Available at: <https://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/72173782/> [Accessed March 5, 2023]. (In Russ.).
3. Gautier SV, Khomyakov SM. Organ donation and transplantation in the Russian Federation in 2018. 11th Report of the Registry of the Russian Transplant Society. *Russian Journal of Transplantology and Artificial Organs*. 2019;21(3):7–32. (In Russ.). <https://doi.org/10.15825/1995-1191-2019-3-7-32>
4. *International Registry in Organ Donation and Transplantation*. 2021. Available at:

https://www.irodat.org/img/database/pdf/Irodat%20December_final%202020.pdf [Accessed March 30, 2023].

5. Gautier SV, Khomyakov SM. Organ donation and transplantation in the Russian Federation in 2021. 14th Report from the Registry of the Russian Transplant Society. *Russian Journal of Transplantology and Artificial Organs*. 2022;24(3):8–31. (In Russ.). <https://doi.org/10.15825/1995-1191-2022-3-8-31>

6. Horton RL, Horton PJ. Knowledge regarding organ donation: identifying and overcoming barriers to organ donation. *Soc Sci Med*. 1990;31(7):791–800. PMID: 2244221 [https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536\(90\)90174-q](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(90)90174-q)

7. Singh M, Katz RC, Beauchamp K, Hannon R. Effects of anonymous information about potential organ transplant recipients on attitudes toward organ transplantation and the willingness to donate organs. *J Behav Med*. 2002;25(5):469–476. PMID: 12442561 <https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1020471007837>

8. Woodfine JD, Redelmeier DA. New thinking about honor and deceased organ donation. *Am J Med*. 2014;127(9):802–803. PMID: 24858064 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amjmed.2014.05.021>

9. Bagozzi RP, Moore DJ. Public service advertisements: emotions and empathy guide prosocial behavior. *J Mark*. 1994;58(1):56–70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299405800105>

10. Sun HJ. A study on the development of public campaign messages for organ donation promotion in Korea. *Health Promot Int*. 2015;30(4):903–918. PMID: 24800757 <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/dau023>

11. *Federalnyy zakon «O reklame» N 38-FZ ot 13 marta 2006 g.* Sobranie zakonodatelstva Rossiyskoy Federatsii. Moscow; 2006. (In Russ.).

12. Romanov AA. Public service advertising (problems and prospects). *Statistics and Economics*. 2010;(6):99–101. (In Russ.).

13. Wakefield MA, Loken B, Hor-nik RC. Use of mass media campaigns to change health behaviour. *Lancet*. 2010;376(9748):1261–1271. PMID: 20933263 [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(10\)60809-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(10)60809-4)

14. Morgan SE, Harrison TR, Long SD, Afifi WA, Stephenson MT, Reichert T. Family discussions about organ donation: how the media influences opi-nions about donation decisions. *Clin Transplant*. 2005;19(5):674–682. PMID: 16146561 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1399-0012.2005.00407.x>

15. Harel I, Kogut T, Pinchas M, Slovic P. Effect of media presentations on willingness to commit to organ donation. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA*. 2017;114(20):5159–5164. PMID: 28461480 <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1703020114>

16. *Database. International Registry in Organ Donation and Transplantation*. Available at: <https://www.irodat.org/?p=database> [Accessed April 5, 2023].

17. Gil-Díaz C. Spain’s record organ donations: mining moral conviction. *Camb Q Healthc Ethics*. 2009;18(3):256–261. PMID: 19460227 <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0963180109090410>

18. *Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Italian Assosiation for the Donation of Organs, Tissues and Cells (AIDO)*. Clementine Hall. April 13, 2019. Available at: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/april/documents/papa-francesco_20190413_donazione-organi.html [Accessed March 30, 2023].

19. *Pope: Organ donation manifestation of solidarity, no to commercialization*. April 13, 2019. Available at:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-04/pope-organ-donation-manifestation-of-solidarity.html> [Accessed April 5, 2023].

20. Anisimov AA, Gilmetdinova ES, Mulendeeva MA, Anisimov AYu. The first social project to popularize organ donation in Tatarstan based on the experience of the United States of America. *Transplantologiya. The Russian Journal of Transplantation*. 2022;14(1):58–67. (In Russ.). <https://doi.org/10.23873/2074-0506-2022-14-1-58-67>

21. Glushchenko OA. Semiotic analysis of polycode texts of social advertising of blood donation. *Kazan Science*. 2020(2):24–27. (In Russ.).

22. Reinhart AM, Lilly AE. Reactions to organ donation appeals in public service announcements aimed at African Americans. *J National Med Assoc*. 2022;113(6):645–653. PMID: 34274146 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jnma.2021.06.002>

23. Khubutiya MSh, Minina MG. Comment on the paper “Analysis of reasons for organ donor shortage and the main directions of its overcoming”. *Transplantologiya. The Russian Journal of Transplantation*. 2011;(2–3):22–23. (In Russ.). <https://doi.org/10.23873/2074-0506-2011-0-2-3-22-23>

Information about the authors

Andrei A. Anisimov, Assistant of the Forensic Medicine Department, Kazan State Medical University; Senior Lecturer at Department of Emergency Medicine and Simulation Medicine, Institute of Fundamental Medicine and Biology, Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5323-7226>, aa_anisimov@bk.ru

25%, development of the study concept and design, analysis and interpretation of data, verification of key intellectual content, approval of the manuscript for publication

Aysylu R. Abdullina, Student of Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7049-266X>

25%, data collection, analysis and interpretation

Adelina T. Raimova, Student of the Pediatrics Faculty, Kazan State Medical University, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0656-5857>

25%, data collection, analysis and interpretation

Yuriy A. Anisimov, Cand. Sci. (Med.), Surgeon, Department of Kidney and Pancreas Transplantation, N.V. Sklifosovsky Research Institute for Emergency Medicine; Senior Laboratory Assistant, the Department of Transplantology and Artificial Organs, A.I. Yevdokimov Moscow State University of Medicine and Dentistry; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3041-7478>, AnisimovYA@sklif.mos.ru

25%, data collection, analysis and interpretation

*The article was received on January 25, 2023;
approved after reviewing February 27, 2023;
accepted for publication March 29, 2023*