

# **Project Summaries – Increasing Organ Donation: The Impact of Information and Dialogue**

## **Project Description**

The aim of the project is to assess methods designed to increase the number of registered organ donors, of which there is a current national shortage. Registration to be a potential posthumous organ donor can be considered an act of civic behaviour and there are contrasting behavioural policy interventions that could be employed to encourage this form of civic participation.

We will test two alternative interventions based around ‘Nudge’ and ‘Think’ principles<sup>1</sup>. The research design will be a post-test only randomised controlled trial conducted amongst students in higher education, a potential target group for efforts to expand the number of people joining the UK Organ Donor Register.

The format will be a lab experiment with the interventions delivered in university lecture theatres. The trial arms will be as follows:

Treatment group 1: Information Nudge on Organ Donation (information pack and video message appeal) + Questionnaire

Treatment group 2: Information Nudge as above + Dialogue (structured discussion relating to the issues surrounding organ donation) + Questionnaire

Control group: Questionnaire only

At the end of the experiment all participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire exploring their views on organ donation in which they are also asked whether they would like to join the national organ donor register. Registration as an organ donor will be the primary outcome measure.

## **Progress to date**

The project is in the set up phase and discussions with the wider project team and external contacts have taken place to finalise our study design. Contacts have been made with UK Blood and Transplant to discuss the detail of the interventions. A literature search and an initial literature review have been conducted.

## **Next steps**

- Gain ethical approval for the research

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<sup>1</sup> Thaler, R.H. and Sunstein, C.R. (2008) *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth and Happiness*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press;

John, P., Smith, G. and Stoker, G. (forthcoming) ‘Nudge Nudge, Think Think: Two Strategies for Changing Civic Behaviour’, Forthcoming in *The Political Quarterly*.

- Data collection to occur in late October/ early Nov 2009
- Analysis to be conducted Nov 2009

## **Outputs**

- A research paper will be presented at the York RCTs conference (Sept 09)
- We aim to report the summary results in Dec 2009 with further analysis and article writing to take place early in 2010.

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