

Submission number: 004
Email received from: Donna Simmers
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Dear Sue

As per our conversation about a week ago, I have given the matter serious consideration and feel it would be best for me to withdraw my research paper on Culture and organ donation, in its current form. This will enable me to continue my work within the community, which is in accordance with the expectations of those I have interviewed.

With attending to the research and reviewing both the state and federal documents with regards to organ and tissue donation, I wish to give constructive feedback on the proposals. As an Australian, I don't think I would be qualified to give this feedback without the 19 years of bedside nursing that has taken me to England, Scotland and Vietnam, where I have witnessed the impact death has on families of many walks of life.

Although Spain is the benchmark in organ and tissue donation statistics, the clinically focused opt-out system is something Australians are not ready or prepared for. This removes their right to choose and give consent.

Families and minority groups within the community are not talking about Organ and Tissue Donation. This is due to 'Avoidance', as it has to do with death. This cannot be marketed by large media campaigns or by those who have NOT cared for a person dying or those declared dead for organ and tissue donation, as they have not seen the impact this has on their families. The topic is emotive, sensitive and personal and so is the choice.

The other issue is 'Opt out' is universal, therefore it implies ALL people, of ALL walks of life, in ALL locations. They are potential organ donors. This requires appropriately qualified nurses and doctors in ALL areas of the state and Australia, in ALL hospitals to meet such a system (there is no debate without this).

As you are aware, in Spain, as with many other European countries there are doctors in their ambulances and there are many other differences. As the doctors and nurses receive formal education in organ and tissue donation, and all hospitals have specially qualified Donor Co-ordinators.

I really hope that this informs the parliament of some of the true issues of an Opt out system. When I first started exploring for this current research I was strongly in favour, but I soon learned the views of others and how many gaps there really are.

Thank you for considering my contribution.

Regards
Donna Simmers
RN, Grad Dip (Crit. Care), MN (Candidate).