

WHY CORNEAL DONATION IN ITALIAN PEDIATRIC HOSPICES IS SO RARE? A QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY OF TEAM MEMBER'S ATTITUDES, KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

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Introduction

Corneal transplant is an effective treatment for restoring sight and corneal tissue donation is feasible for most part of Hospice's patient(1). In the last 8 years in Italy we produced 452 pediatric's corneal donors (260 from DCD), but no official data are kept about how many donors came from pediatric Hospices (SIT). According to our experience, we believe that pediatric hospice population is a potentially underutilized source of eye tissue.

Objectives

Our aim is to explore the Hospice's staff knowledge and their attitude in corneal donation with the purpose to understand how to improve all the pathway and promote donation.

Methods

An anonymous electronic questionnaire with open and closed questions sent to the team working in the Italian pediatric hospices. The questionnaire contained a mixture of questions plus two attitudinal statements with fixed responses and one free text component.

Results

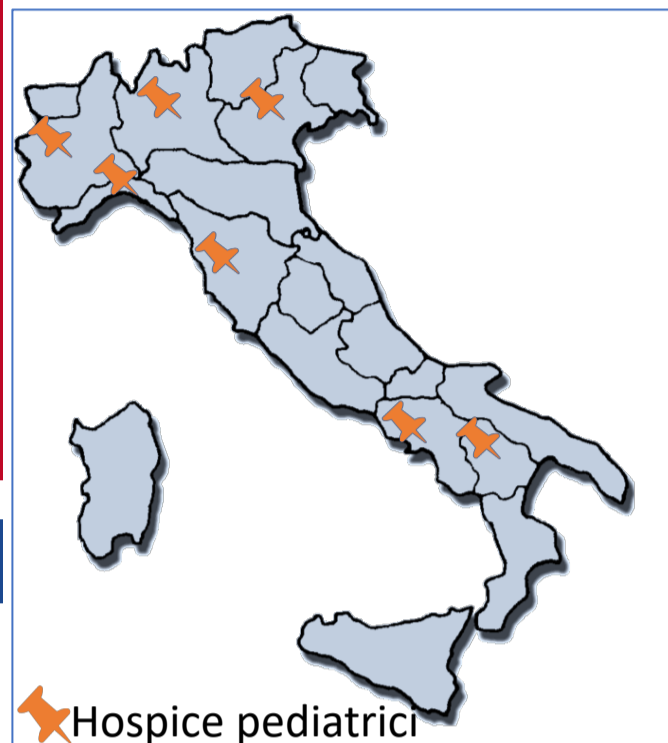
Out of 7 Pediatric Hospices approached 4 agreed to participate with a response rate of 62%.

More than 90% claim to be in accordance that hospice patients being able to donate corneas as a rewarding opportunity for them and their families and more than 50% think that it can help family members to better mourn. About 60% of the participants are convinced that all eligible patients should be offered the possibility to donate but they are not sure that entry into hospice is the right time to face the topic.

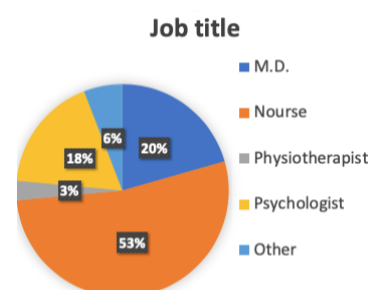
About 70% rarely participated in a corneal tissue donation because the procedure is very rare in their hospice, explained they did not know the appropriate procedure and the technical difficulties associated with that.

About 50% think that inform the patient and his family about the possibility of donation is a part of their role but do not feel comfortable with that.

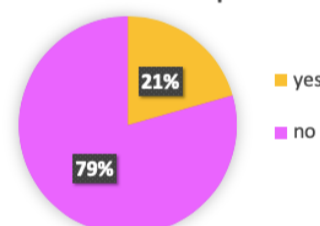
More than 90% have not received a specific training and expressed interest in doing so.



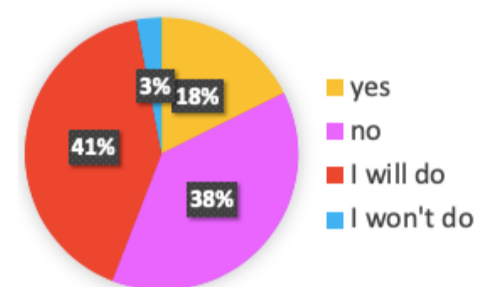
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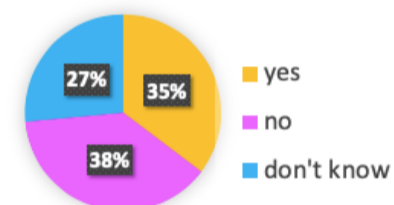
Have you received a specific training regarding corneal donation in Hospice?



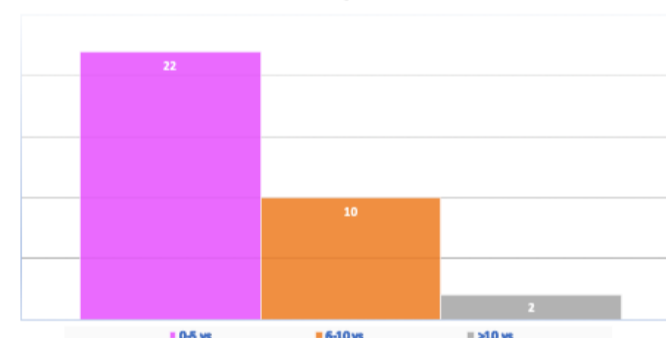
Are you formally registered as organ donor?



I feel comfortable enough to start a conversation about corneal donation with a family



How many years have you worked in Pediatric Hospice?



Conclusions

All participants in the questionnaire declare that they have doubts about their knowledge and wish to be able to increase their skills both in the technical and relational fields in order to best perform an activity that they feel an integral part of their work. Lack of knowledge on corneal donation between Hospice care staff seems to be the main barrier to discussing corneal's donation and this could be improved by local policies encompassing further education, prompts in documentation and availability of leaflets.

References

1. Gillon S. Palliat Med 2010; 24: 551–552