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# Organ Donation Research: Overview

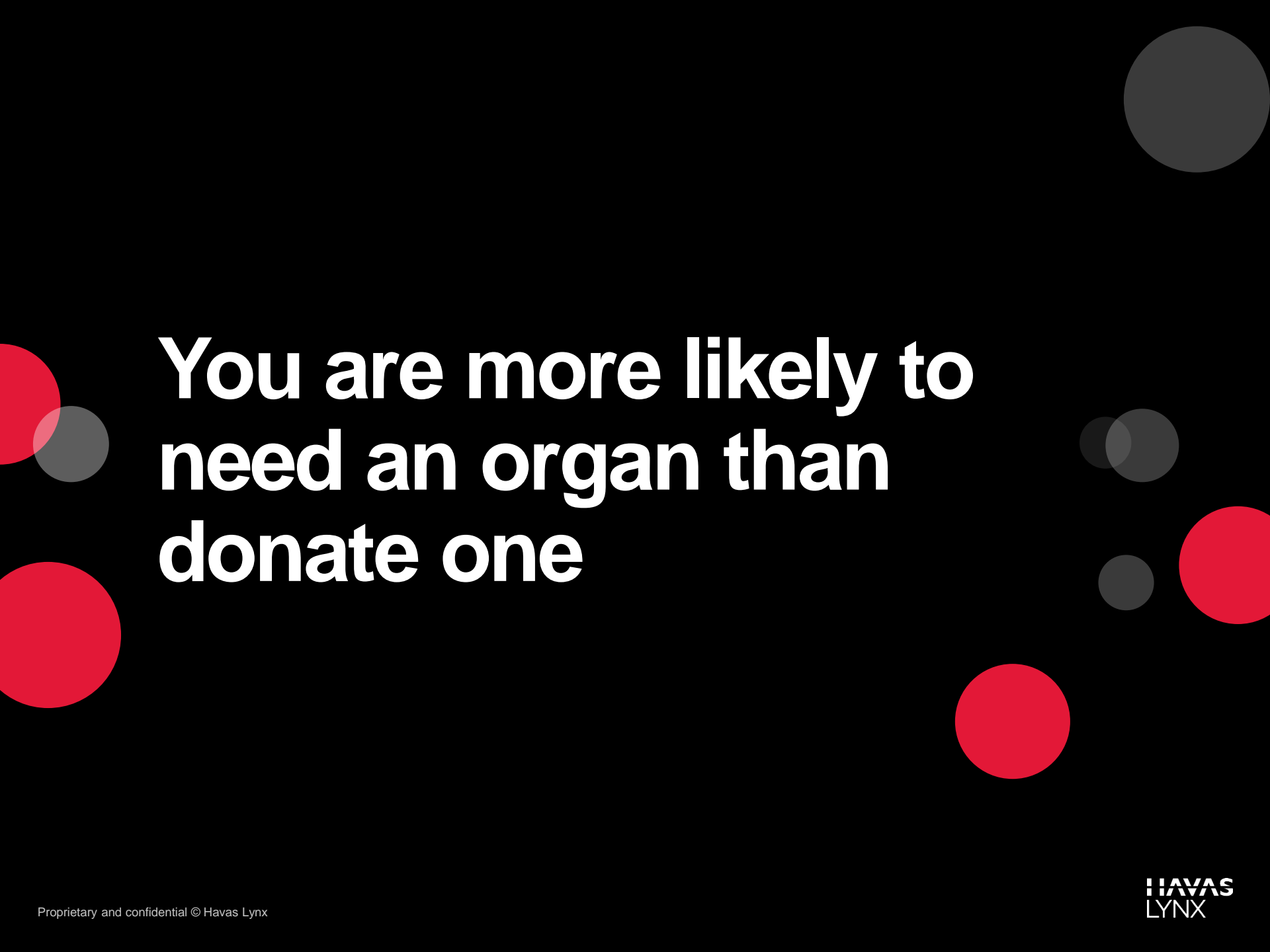
# What is organ donation?

Organ donation is giving an organ to someone else who needs a transplant. This donation will greatly enhance or save the life of the person who receives the transplanted organ.

You can help save thousands of lives in the UK every year by signing up to become an organ donor and telling your family you want to donate.

Your family will be asked to support organ donation if, when you die, you are in a position to donate your organs. So make sure you tell them you want to be an organ donor too.

**Sadly, around three people every day die in need of an organ transplant.**



**You are more likely to  
need an organ than  
donate one**

# A challenge...

**90%**

Would be willing to  
donate their organs

**23%**

Sign-up to donate

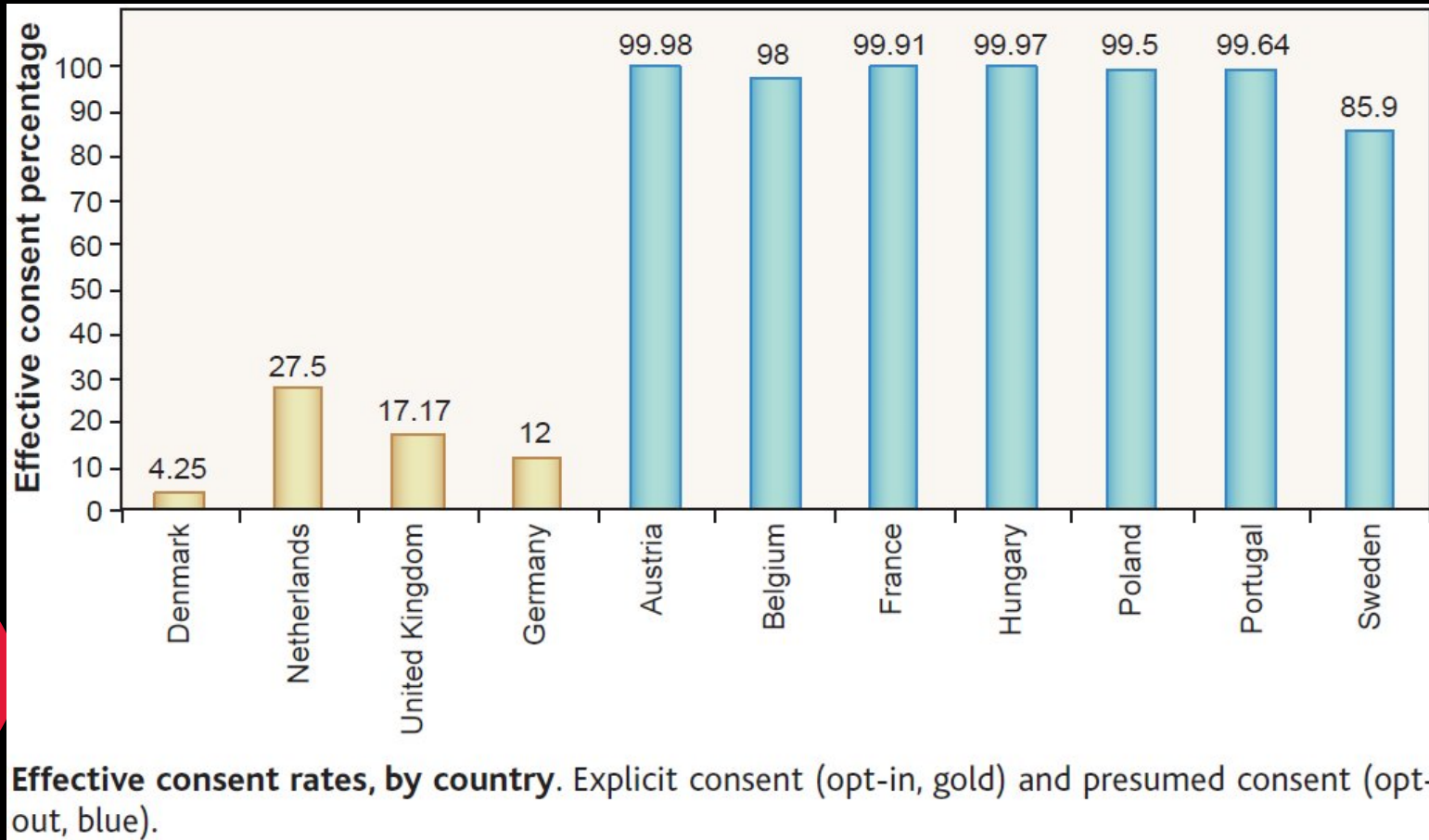
# Opt-in vs. Opt-out

The Government in England intends to change the law on consent for organ donation. Under the new system everybody would be considered a potential donor unless they have added their details to the NHS Organ Donor Register to say that they do not wish to donate their organs, or are in one of the excluded groups.

The Government has indicated that the new system may be in place from April 2020.

Over 80% of adults in England say they would definitely, or would consider, donating their organs, but only 37% of the UK population have registered as donors on the NHS Organ Donor Register.

# Opt-in vs. Opt-out

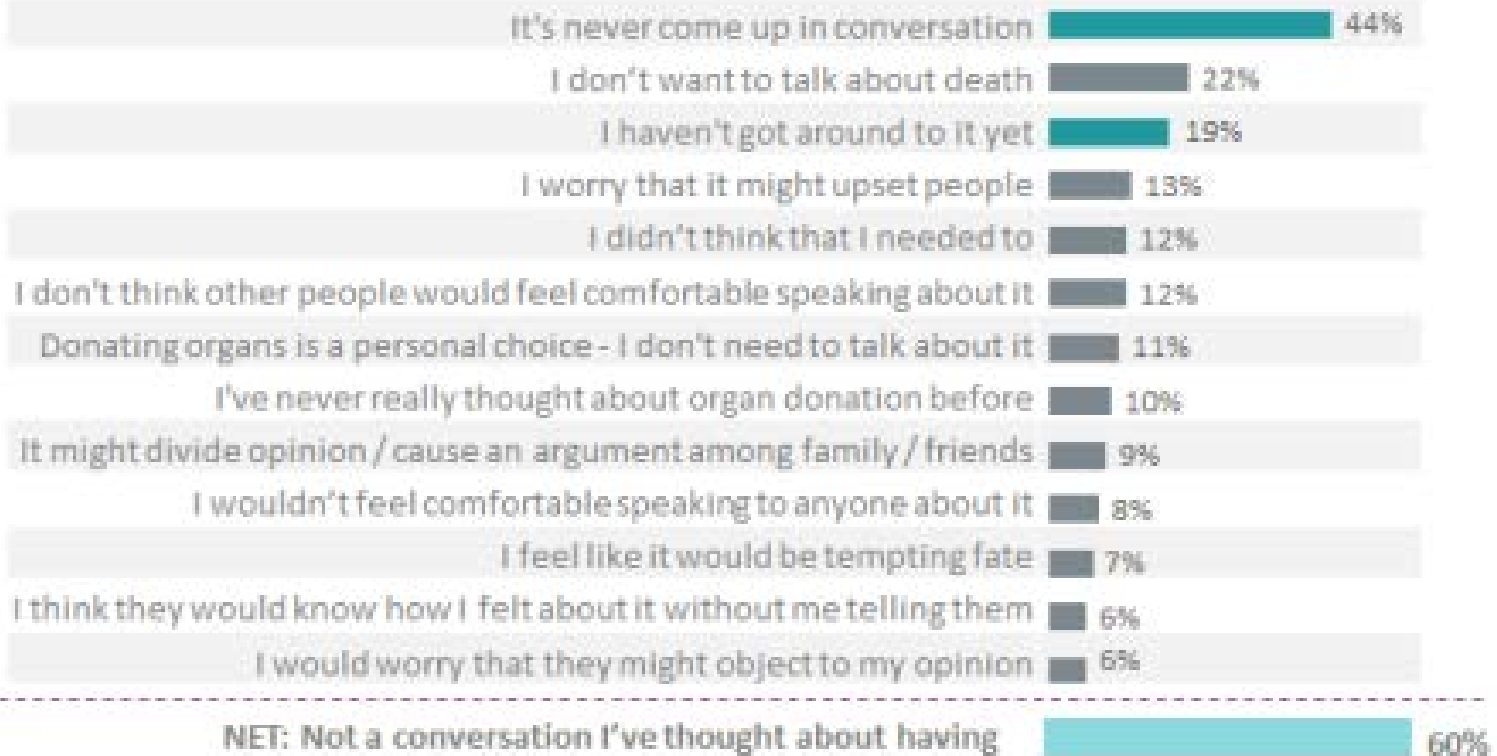




**“THINKING ABOUT MY  
OWN DEATH MAKES ME  
UNCOMFORTABLE”**

**Gallup Poll  
USA  
2012**

# When it comes to donating, the family removes consent...





# When it comes to donating, the family removes consent...

Many people don't realise that their family's support is needed for organ donation to go ahead.

If you've never talked to your family about your decision to be a donor, they will not know you want to save lives.

A few words can make an extraordinary difference.

You could leave them guessing what you would have wanted at a difficult time. Or it might come as a surprise that you have registered your decision to save lives, making it hard to support your decision to donate.

Every year, organs go to waste because relatives aren't sure what their loved one wanted.

# NHSBT - Awareness and discussion of organ donation

Many people surveyed have never been exposed to the topic of organ donation.

People feel uncomfortable talking about death.

People may struggle to empathise/understand how many people are waiting for donations as it is not as widely communicated as the subject of cancer for example.

In total only 50% of people surveyed have discussed organ donation previously and of these 74% (only 37% of the total population) have spoken to their close friends or family about their own wishes. Those in AB social grades are the most likely to have discussed organ donation. Women more so than men (54% vs. 45% respectively) and those who are married or living with their partner (55% compared to 41% of singles).

# When it comes to donating, the family removes consent...

It doesn't matter how you begin to talk about organ donation to your family. It's just really important that you do.

**NHS organ donation website shares tips on how to start the conversation.**

# Key barriers/concerns around organ donation

I worry hospital staff might not do their best to save my life.

I don't want to think about my death.

A fear that doctors will not respect the body and wishes of the deceased and a concern that if you sign up to the ODR 'they' will 'take' everything they can.

Fears and misconceptions over how the body is treated during donation, with concerns that the bodies will be 'ripped apart'.

A lack of trust in the medical profession emerges as the single most common reservation towards organ donation. There is a fear that doctors might prioritise others, for example, saving younger/healthier people and opting to save multiple lives in place of one individual.

Superstition that by thinking and talking about death, it could become a reality.

Strong attachment to the physical form after death particularly with regard to keeping the body whole.

# Motivations to support organ donation

People are aware of the benefits of organ donation and many are already persuaded that it is a good thing to do. 65% of people surveyed agree that they would be improving and saving the lives of others if they did donate their organs after death, and a sizable proportion of the population takes a practical approach to organ donation: 58% believe their organs would otherwise go to waste.

A key reason to support organ donation is altruism; helping others and ensuring something good comes from a sad situation. This is even more compelling if organ donation involves helping close relatives or friends to live either after their own death or helping a close relative with a living donation. This makes the benefit of donation much more tangible and familiar and the thought that a loved one could someday need a transplant can be motivating enough for some to support organ donation.

# Organ donation and religion

Overall support for organ donation amongst BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) groups is lower and some barriers are more pronounced in certain Muslim groups.

Lower willingness to donate amongst those from black BME groups are in part linked to lower levels of trust in the NHS than in the population as a whole.

Other concerns more pronounced from BME groups include fear of upsetting family members and a lack of knowledge about organ donation, indicating the need for more discussion and education around the process.

Religion has the potential to both raise awareness and encourage support / consent.

Few people of faith, whether practicing or lapsed, are aware or certain of the official position of their religion on organ donation.

# Organ donation and religion

Hindu's are prohibited by religious law from donating their organs (Donor recovery).

Christian faith suggests that organ donation is an act of love and organ donation would reflect ones relationship with god (organdonation).

Transplantation is not allowed if one is a Jehovah's witness (Medscape).

In Islamic belief one can donate organs if one desires this, although during life these organs can only be minor organs (Kidney) (al-islam).

# Promoting awareness – family consent

Awareness that family or close friends will be approached about organ donation in the event of a loved one's death is relatively low.

Prior discussion is the factor most likely to encourage familial consent, even more than registration to the ODR.

Being on the ODR and having discussed wishes is the most powerful scenario in facilitating consent, with 90% claiming they would agree to their loved one's organs being donated in this scenario. Most are driven by a strong desire to respect the deceased's wishes, which have been made clear to them through a dual communication.

If a person has not communicated in some way that they wish to be an organ donor it is often assumed that this means that they do not want to donate rather than that they have just not done anything about it.



# Families veto hundreds of organ donations

Organ donations from hundreds of registered donors have been blocked over the past five years, figures show.

It is estimated that 1,200 people missed out on a potentially life-saving transplant as a result of the refusals, which accounted for one in seven donations over the period.

One option to overcome this would be to no longer ask the next of kin to confirm consent or authorisation. Their permission is not required by law if someone had registered a decision to donate on the NHS organ donor register.