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## Understanding Christian African American's religious beliefs and organ donation intentions

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African Americans (AAs) are overrepresented on the organ transplant waiting list and underrepresented among organ and tissue donors. A multitude of factors contribute to this disparity, and reluctance to donate expressed by AAs plays a prominent role. One of the most highly noted reasons for lack of donation among AAs is the perception that donation is contrary to religious beliefs. The purpose of this study is to explore religiosity, religious beliefs, religious involvement and their association with willingness to donate and the written expression of donation intentions among AAs. Data were collected from the baseline assessment of a randomized effectiveness study that evaluated the effectiveness of a self-administered intervention (Project ACTS: About Choices in Transplantation and Sharing). Self-administered questionnaires were completed by 585 AA adults residing in the metropolitan Atlanta area; however, for the purpose of all analyses, only the 505 participants (86.3%) who identified their religion as Christian were included. Measures assess religious service attendance; subjective religiosity; religious norms; personal experiences with donation; and donation intention. Results indicate that religious service attendance was not associated with either donation intentions measures; however, subjective religiosity was significantly associated with willingness to serve as an organ donor. Additionally the belief that one's religion supports donation is associated with both willingness to donate ( $p < .001$ ) and written donation intentions ( $p < .001$ ). Findings suggest that religiosity is a multidimensional construct and results differ depending on how the construct is being measured and operationalized.

### Learning Areas:

- Diversity and culture
- Planning of health education strategies, interventions, and programs

### Learning Objectives:

1. Describe an attitudinal barrier based on religious beliefs and its association with organ donation among African Americans.
2. Explain the role of normative religious beliefs with respect to organ donation decision making among African Americans.

**Keywords:** Religion, African American

**4063.0: Religion in Health: Beliefs, Practices, and Avenues for Intervention**

## Hypotheses

1. Religious service attendance will be negatively associated with willingness to serve as an organ donor and written expression of donation intentions.
2. Subjective religiosity will be negatively associated with willingness to serve as an organ donor and written expression of donation intentions.
3. Spirituality will be negatively associated with willingness to serve as an organ donor and written expression of donation intentions.
4. Religious norms will be positively associated with willingness to serve as an organ donor and written donation intentions.

## Measurement Items

<p><b>Religious Service Attendance</b> (M=4.32, SD=1.12)</p>	<p><b>How often do you attend religious services during the average month?</b></p> <p>a. 1 - never b. 2 - less than once a year c. 3 - a few times a year d. 4 - a few times a month (1-3 times/mo) e. 5 - at least once a week (1-3 times/wk) f. 6 - nearly every day (4 + times/wk)</p>				
<p><b>Subjective Religiosity</b> (M=3.17, SD=0.81)</p>	<p><b>How religious would you say you are?</b></p> <p>a. 1 - not religious at all b. 2 - not too religious c. 3 - fairly religious d. 4 - very religious</p>				
<p><b>Spirituality</b> (M=3.51, SD=0.60)</p>	<p><b>How spiritual would you say you are?</b></p> <p>a. 1 - not spiritual at all b. 2 - not too spiritual c. 3 - fairly spiritual d. 4 - very spiritual</p>				
<p><b>Religious Norms</b> (M=4.32, SD=0.94) *item reverse scored</p>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<p><b>Willingness to serve as an organ donor</b> (r=0.67)</p>	<p><b>I have been taught that organ donation is <u>against</u> my religion.</b></p> <p>Strongly Disagree    Disagree    Neither Agree Nor Disagree    Agree    Strongly Agree</p> <p><b>I am willing to have organs donated after my death. I would be willing to donate an organ to a person of a different race than myself.</b></p>				
<p><b>Written expression of donation intentions</b> (r=0.62) *measurement combines 2 items (license and donor card) based on Stages of Change model</p>	<p><b>Please mark the statement that best describes how you feel about designating yourself as a potential organ donor on your driver's license/donor card.</b></p> <p>a. I haven't designated and don't plan to. (PRECONTEMPLATION) b. I haven't designated and haven't thought about it. (CONTEMPLATION) c. I have not designated but plan to. (PREPARATION) d. I designated myself recently. (ACTION) e. I designated myself and have been for a while. (MAINTENANCE)</p>				