



# Thematic Analysis of the Organ Transplantation News in Turkish Press

Ayşe Göbekli<sup>a,\*</sup>, Rabiye Güney<sup>b</sup>, and Zeynep Karaköse<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>University of Health Sciences, Hamidiye Health Sciences Institute, Nursing Sciences Main Branch, Istanbul, Turkey; and <sup>b</sup>University of Health Sciences, Hamidiye Faculty of Nursing, Pediatric Nursing Department, Istanbul, Turkey

---

## ABSTRACT

**Background.** Organ transplantation, which is one of the most important developments in medical technology and a successful treatment against irreversible life-organ insufficiency, gives people a second chance at life and increases their quality of life. The aim of this qualitative research is to detect how often organ transplantation news is reported in the Turkish press and to analyze the content of this news.

**Methods.** The data in this qualitative study were obtained from the first 3 most widely read newspapers (Posta, Hürriyet, and Sabah) in Turkey between January and July 2018. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis.

**Results.** When the newspapers were examined, only 17 texts on organ transplants were obtained during a period of 6 months. Six themes were defined after the data analysis. These themes were (1) information on the organ transplantation process, (2) emotional reactions, (3) medical knowledge, (4) importance of organ donation, (5) organ transplant in Turkey, and (6) legal regulation. Most news focused on the emotional reactions of patients and their families and information on the organ transplantation process.

**Conclusions.** When we looked at the whole content in Turkish press, there was a place for organ transplantation. However, it is considered that in press news, where people access information easily, more space should be given to organ transplantation to create awareness of how vital it is in changing some people's lives; health professionals and journalists need to work collaboratively to reach this aim.

---

**O**RGAN transplantation, which is one of the most important developments in medical technology and a successful treatment against irreversible life-organ insufficiency, gives people a second chance at life and increases their quality of life [1]. There is a growing need for organ donation and transplantation in Turkey and in the rest of the world [2]. Many factors affect the number of organ transplants; one of them is the media [3]. Mass media such as television, radio, and newspapers are commonly used to expose large populations to certain messages [4]. They inform people and direct their health attitudes and behavior [5]. National newspapers, one of the mass media, interact with readers. News in national newspapers is crucial for informing the public about the content of the renewed programs and the current situation in the country [6]. Quick et al [3] stated that an increase in media coverage increased organ transplantation. In a study conducted with nursing students, the students learned about organ donation from media such as newspapers, magazines, books,

and brochures. According to the results of this study, the most effective way to inform individuals about organ donation is media and the Internet [1]. Organ failures are increasing, and the need for transplants is increasing each day. In line with this growing need, the media need to provide the public with advertising and news that may promote donation among the community. Nevertheless, the current situation of organ transplantation news in Turkey is unknown. The aim of this qualitative research was to detect how often organ transplantation news was handled in the Turkish press and to analyze the content of this news.

---

\*Address correspondence to Ayşe Göbekli, University of Health Sciences, Hamidiye Health Sciences Institute, Nursing Sciences Main Branch, Selimiye mahallesi, Tıbbiye caddesi, no:38, 34668, Üsküdar/Istanbul, Turkey. Tel: +905462199196; Fax +90 216 418 96 20. E-mail: [ayse\\_9196@hotmail.com](mailto:ayse_9196@hotmail.com)

## METHODS

The 3 bestselling newspapers (Posta, Hürriyet, and Sabah) in the Turkish press were chosen for this qualitative study by the date of January 1, 2018 [7]. The data were obtained from these newspapers in Turkey between January 1, 2018 and July 30, 2018. A newspaper dealer allocated the newspapers every day. The received newspapers were scanned by 3 researchers weekly, and news about organ transplantation was cut out and stored. As a starting point, newspaper articles were read to determine the content. Then the news was transcribed, important sentences that were pertinent to the research question were underlined, and those sentences were read repeatedly to gain familiarity.

Thematic analysis, a qualitative data analysis technique [8], was implemented, establishing *in vivo* codes, codes, and categories according to Saldaña [9]. In terms of research rigor, Lincoln and Guba's [10] 4 criteria for qualitative research were taken into consideration [11]. First, the data were collected for 6 months based on prolonged engagement to ensure the credibility (truth value) of the research. Referential adequacy, peer debriefing, and triangulation, which are 3 other ways of ensuring credibility [10], allowed comparison of preliminary analysis with stored newspaper articles. For triangulation, 3 different researchers' categories and themes were compared in terms of peer review, and 3 different newspapers were included to determine an answer to the research question. Second, transferability was applied, preferring purposive sample. To this end, the 3 bestselling newspapers were included in the study sample. Third, themes were evaluated and discussed by a person independent from the study for the inquiry audit technique to ensure dependability. Finally, 3 researchers provided feedback to ensure consistency and confirmability of the researchers' work during coding, interpretation, and analysis. In this instance, findings were discussed, and any discrepancies were defined to maximize rigor and reliability during the analysis process.

## RESULTS

When the newspapers were examined, only 17 news texts on organ transplants were obtained during the period of 6 months. A large proportion of the news ( $n = 13$ ) was obtained from the Sabah newspaper. The data analysis revealed 6 themes: information on the organ transplantation process, emotional reactions, medical knowledge, importance of organ donation, organ transplant in Turkey, and legal regulation. All news was positive toward organ donation or organ transplantation. Most of the news focused on the emotional reactions of patients and their families and frequently yielded information on the organ transplantation process. The topic of the news was usually related to kidney, liver, and heart transplantation.

### Information on the Organ Transplantation Process

Topics such as situations in which the organ transplant needs to be stopped, recipient-donor information, and emphasis on the awareness of brain death were addressed in this theme.

"When his brain death occurred, his family donated his organs."

"A mother found out that if she gives her kidney to someone else instead of her daughter, three lives would be saved.

(Cross transplantation) That's why she gave her kidney to her daughter's dialysis friend."

In the event of cancer in the donor, some news reported that organ transplants cannot be performed. For example, "It was said that transplantation need to be cancelled due to a father who prepared to give his kidney and were diagnosed with prostate cancer."

### Emotional Reactions

Various emotions were reflected in the news according to the nature of the disease, difficulties experienced during the illness and transplant process, waiting list, uncertainty, and a second chance at life. Feelings were both positive and negative, such as shock, denial, disappointment, despair, misery, worry, hope, expectation, happiness, trust, acceptance, goodness, gratefulness, and excitement.

In the newspaper article titled "Sibship of Organ," a mother whose daughter received cross-organ transplant said that patience and faith gave them power. In another article titled "The Partnership of Kidney from Van (Turkey) to Bulgaria," a cross-kidney transplantation was performed between 2 family members. Ibrahim Emin from Bulgaria had been on dialysis for a long time, was experiencing difficult days, and was looking for a kidney transplant. The incoming phone call provided hope for both families. The transplant recipient said, "I'm like a rebirth, and I'm going to take care of my grandchildren."

In the newspaper article titled "First Birth after Heart Transplantation in Turkey," a woman who had a heart transplant 15 years ago became a mother. The mother with the baby said, "In this country, my heart transplant was highly talked about. Now the world is talking about my birth. I've waited for five years this baby. I am grateful to the family that gave me a heart many years ago. I will donate my eyes that are only my undamaged organs."

### Medical Knowledge

Information about organ transplantation was given by doctors in the newspaper articles. In a newspaper report, the doctor said, "In Alperen, there was a congenital liver disease called PFIK cholestasis. Close relative marriages, metabolic diseases can lead to this situation. In such cases that depends on innate enzyme deficiency, the only remedy is liver transplantation."

The doctor gave following medical information in another newspaper:

"When organ transplantation cannot be performed because of antibodies in the blood of recipients or blood group mismatches, cross-transplants are performed. Three couples became a big family, thanks to organ exchange, which emerged in the most appropriate way in terms of medicinal and ethical."

### Importance of Organ Donation

The news included information showing how important and necessary organ donation is, including saving a life with

organ donation, decision for organ donation, waiting for organ donation, and refusal of organ donation by family members. In the newspaper article a doctor said, “Twenty percent of transplantation is being made with kidney in Turkey that is taken from deceased donor. I wish, we had more organ was donated, we could have done transplanting organ from deceased donor” and A man, who lives with the transplant of liver from a deceased donor: “Donate your organs. Don’t let your organs fall into the soil.”

#### Organ Transplant in Turkey

There was news showing the place of Turkey in organ transplantation, including birth after the first heart transplant in Turkey, organ transplants performed in Turkey, and choice of Turkey for organ transplantation: “In the Akdeniz University Organ Center, a kidney and liver transplant performed from two live donors at the same time to a 1-year-old baby. The making two transplants from a live donor to a baby at this age, a first in Turkey.”

#### Legal Regulation

In one significant example, a law in Mexico ordered that everyone who died in the country would automatically become an organ donor unless they signed a petition to refuse it. News was related to starting an opt-out system in Mexico: “With the new law enacted unanimously in the Mexican Senate, anyone who has lost their lives in the country will be automatically organ donors.”

#### DISCUSSION

Education is key to reducing the severity of organ shortage for both health professionals and the public. Can and Hovardaoglu [12] emphasized that education would help develop positive attitudes toward organ donation in Turkey. Similarly, Salim et al [13] reported that public education by media might increase organ donation. After the analysis of thousands of pages, which include interviews with families, Morgan et al [14] reported that on a large scale, families gained knowledge from the media regarding transplantation and organ donation. Nevertheless, this study found that 2 of 3 newspapers had little transplantation or organ donation news.

Additionally, there was no information about people waiting for organ donation in Turkey. It seems that conditions remained unchanged for the last 10 years in Turkey. A content analysis study [15], that was conducted in Turkey between 2007 and 2008 reviewed organ donation and transplantation news in the media. A total of 230 newspapers and 45 television channels were examined by researchers. Like in this study, the authors concluded that Turkish media, including newspapers, did not have adequate information on transplantation. On the other hand, available headlines were all favorable and focused on partnership and giving a life from one person to another. Another content analysis [16] searched for coverage of organ donation news broadcasts between 1990 and 2005 in the United States. ABC, NBC, and CBS broadcasts were

reviewed. Overall, this study showed that organ donation was addressed reasonably in news broadcasts. Although much of the news coverage was positive, it was emphasized that the need for organs and the process of becoming a potential organ donor was taken into consideration. In the news, deceased donation and living donation are addressed almost equally. Almost all news in this study mentioned successful organ transplantation. Lastly, newspapers reported the emotional reactions of transplant recipients and their families in this study. Holman and Adina Karner-Huțuleac [17] determined that the Romanian press portrayed the psychological experiences of recipients and donors such as hope, anxiety, gratefulness, and happiness. In both countries, journalists might have aimed to create public empathy toward these patients.

#### CONCLUSIONS

When we looked at the whole content in the Turkish press, there was a place for organ transplantation but it was very limited specifically regarding pediatric transplantation. Substantially in press news, where people access information easily, more space should be given to organ transplantation to create awareness of how vital it is in changing some people’s lives. Health professionals and journalists need to cooperate to achieve this goal.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Savaser S, Sahiner NC, Dogan Z, et al. The effect of nursing education on the opinion of students regarding organ donation. *Int J Nurs Clin Pract* 2015;2:1–6.
- [2] Durur F, Akbulut Y. Evaluation of policies for organ transplantation in Turkey. *Bus Manage Stud* 2017;5:570–85.
- [3] Quick BL, Meyer KR, Kim DK, Taylor D, Kline J, Apple T, et al. Examining the association between media coverage of organ donation and organ transplantation rates. *Clin Transplant* 2007;21:219–23.
- [4] Wakefield MA, Loken B, Hornik RC. Use of mass media campaigns to change health behaviour. *Lancet* 2010;376:1261–71.
- [5] Robinson MN, Tansil KA, Elder RW, et al. Mass media health communication campaigns combined with health-related product distribution: a community guide systematic review. *Am J Prev Med* 2014;47:360–71.
- [6] Çuhadar E, Ünal F. Evaluation of contribution of local newspapers to lifelong learning (example of Bartın Province). *Univ J Educ Res* 2018;6:478–90.
- [7] Newspaper circulation. <http://gazetetirajlari.com/GunlukTirajlar.aspx>. [Accessed 1 January 2018].
- [8] Green J, Thorogood N. *Qualitative methods for health research*. 4th ed. London: Sage Publications; 2015.
- [9] Saldaña J. *An introduction to codes and coding. The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. 1st ed. London: Sage Publications; 2009.
- [10] Lincoln YS, Guba EG. *Naturalistic inquiry*, 75. London: Sage Publications; 1985.
- [11] Quick J, Hall S. Part two: qualitative research. *J Perioper Pract* 2015;25:129–33.
- [12] Can F, Hovardaoglu S. Organ donation: a comparison of donating and nondonating families in Turkey. *Transplant Proc* 2017;49:1969–74.
- [13] Salim A, Malinoski D, Schulman D, Desai C, Navarro S, Ley EC. The combination of an online organ and tissue registry with a public education campaign can increase

the number of organs available for transplantation. *J Trauma* 2010;69(2):451.

[14] Morgan SE, Harrison TR, Long SD, Afifi WA, Stephenson MS, Reichert T. Family discussions about organ donation: how the media influences opinions about donation decisions. *Clin Transplant* 2005;19:674–82.

[15] Çolak MY, Hekimoglu D, Ersoy K, et al. Health content analysis of organ donation and transplantation news on Turkish television channels and in Turkish print media. *Transplant Proc* 2010;42:134–6.

[16] Quick BL, Kim DK, Meyer K. A 15-year review of ABC, CBS, and NBC news coverage of organ donation: Implications for organ donation campaigns. *Health Commun* 2009;24:137–45.

[17] Holman A, Karner-Huțuleac A. Press portrayals of the psychological experiences of people involved in organ transplantation. In: Maturo A, Hošková-Mayerová Š, Soitu DT, Kacprzyk J, editors. *Recent trends in social systems: quantitative theories and quantitative models*. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing; 2017. p. 281–93.