

Promoting Organ Donation to Hispanics: The Role of the Media and Medicine

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This study assesses the impact of a paid media advertising campaign employing Spanish language, culturally sensitive television and radio spots airing on major Hispanic stations in southern California. An advertising tracking study with a baseline and three postintervention telephone surveys was conducted from 2001 through 2003 among 500 randomly selected self-identified, primarily Spanish language dominant adult Hispanics.

Measures of organ donation attitudes and behaviors (decision and declared intent to donate organs) improved significantly ($P < .05$) in 2001 and 2002, then leveled off or declined in 2003. Among the reasons given for not making a decision to donate was fear that medical personnel might withhold care from identified organ donors, suggesting lack of knowledge and distrust of the health care system. Few respondents talked to health care professionals or contacted the organ procurement agency for information either before or after the campaign. Findings from this study indicate a need for ongoing public education in the Hispanic community about organ transplantation and donation. Health professionals need to become more engaged in encouraging Hispanic patients to learn about organ transplantation and donation, and to inform their families that they have made the personal decision to donate.

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A continuing challenge for organ donation and transplantation programs is that demand for organs far exceeds supply. Although the number of cadaveric organ donors is steadily increasing, the number of people awaiting transplants is rising faster, and more than 89,000 people are currently on the national waiting list (Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network, 2005a).

Hispanics composed 13% of all deceased organ donors nationally, and 33% of all deceased California organ donors in 2003, proportionate to their representation in the population at both the national and state levels (Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network, 2005b). Although the donor rate for Hispanics and other ethnic minorities in the United States has increased greatly during the past decade, all communities lack a sufficient supply of donor organs to meet the need.

As growth in the Hispanic population is projected to continue to outpace that of most other ethnic groups in the United States, the rapidly growing Hispanic community, especially in the West, will become increasingly important as a social marketing target population for organ donation in the future. Hispanics represented 12% of the total U.S. population in 2000, 45% of Western state residents, and 34% of Californians (Therrien & Ramirez, 2000). Hispanics accounted for about half of national population growth between 2000 and 2004 (U.S. Census Bureau News, 2004); census demographers project that their proportion will double in the next 50 years, to 24% in 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). While Hispanics still reside primarily in the West, shifts in immigration and settlement patterns have dispersed this population much more broadly throughout the United States. In the past decade, both direct immigration and secondary migration produced more than 90% growth in the foreign-born populations of 22 states with relatively low prior immigration levels (Capps, Passel, Perez-Lopez & Fix, 2003). As well, Hispanics are a highly mobile population compared with other ethnic groups, with a constant influx of newcomers both from other communities within the United States and their country of origin (Schachter, 2004). Thus, further efforts to promote organ donation within the Hispanic community throughout the nation are essential.

Any type of media campaign targeted to Hispanics, whether for commercial or social marketing purposes, requires consideration of both language and media preferences. Hispanics may be monolingual or bilingual, and bilingual individuals may be either Spanish or English dominant. A 1994 study found that most Hispanics consume media in the first language they learned to speak (Mogelonsky, 1995). A national poll conducted in 2001 of 10,000 young Hispanics (age 18–34) found that 68% were either bilingual or Spanish dominant (Cobo, 2003). Other studies indicate that Hispanics tend to watch more television than the general U.S. population, and prefer to watch it in Spanish (Delener & Neelankavil, 1990; Marketing News, 1988; Yorgey, 1998). Thus, for Spanish dominant Hispanics, Spanish is the preferred language and television is the preferred medium.

The present study assesses the results of the first large-scale paid media advertising campaign to promote organ donation employing Spanish language, culturally sensitive television and radio spots. With substantial funding from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to sustain a 3-year effort, it employs qualitative and quantitative research to better understand Hispanic awareness of and attitudes toward organ donation and to assess the impact of targeted messages in the Hispanic community of Southern California, incorporating concepts and methods from the behavioral sciences, health education, and marketing research.

The theoretical foundation for the project was Prochaska's transtheoretical model of behavior change (Prochaska & DeClemente, 1983). Originally developed for use in smoking cessation programs, this model since has been widely used in many types of health promotion programs, including organ donation in the African American community (Tamburlin & Rice, 2002). Key organizing concepts are that behavioral change occurs in stages over time; an individual's decision to change reflects a relatively weighted assessment of the pros and cons of changing; and different individuals in a target population are at different stages of readiness for change (Cancer Prevention Research Center, 2005). Applying this model to promote organ donation in the Hispanic community requires consideration of several cultural factors affecting behavior. Foremost is a reluctance to speak about death, or to make plans for either their own death or death of a family member. This attitude reflects a fatalistic attitude and belief in God's will, as well as a predilection for procrastination (Kearl, 1989; Korzenny & Korzenny, 2005). Many Hispanics believe, as did the pre-Colombian Nahuas Indians, that the soul resides in the heart, and wonder whether a heart transplant recipient could become a different person after the operation (Hayes-Bautista, 2004).

Design and Methods

OneLegacy, serving seven Southern California counties, is the largest and most ethnically diverse organ procurement organization in the United States, with a service area of more than 17 million people. From 2001 through 2003, OneLegacy conducted a targeted Hispanic paid media campaign and advertising effectiveness study with two consortium partners, Synovate and al Punto Advertising, firms with expertise in Hispanic market research and advertising, respectively. The study design was based on the grant project's objectives:

1. Increase the number of Hispanic families consenting to donate organs from a baseline rate of 32% in 2000 to 37% in Project Year Two (federal fiscal year 2002, ending September 30, 2002) and 42% in Project Year 3 (federal fiscal year 2003).
2. Increase the number of Hispanic individual declarations of intent to donate organs in the agency's service area by 5% in Project Year Two and 10% in Project Year Three, from a baseline figure to be established through a telephone survey early in Project Year One (federal fiscal year 2001).

The intervention consisted of a paid television and radio campaign to promote organ and tissue donation within the Hispanic community. A distinctive element of this study is that paid advertising time was used rather than unpaid PSA (Public Service Announcement) time for television and radio spots. The latter commonly run at times of minimal audience size, and much larger audiences can be reached using paid advertising time. Four telephone surveys measured 500 Spanish dominant Hispanic adults' attitudes and behaviors on organ donation, once prior to the campaign and following the spring media flight during each of the 3 project years. The overall research design for the telephone survey phase of the project was that of an advertising tracking study, in which the same survey is replicated over time while an advertising stimulus is delivered to the population from which the survey samples are drawn.

Preliminary Qualitative Research and Advertisement Pretest

To better understand the reasons why Hispanic families do or do not consent to organ donation and to gauge the reactions of actual and potential donor families to the television spots, in fall 2000, prior to launching the media campaign, the organ procurement agency commissioned a bilingual and bicultural researcher to conduct in-depth, face-to-face interviews, approximately 45 minutes in length, with 12 Spanish-dominant Hispanic families, 5 of whom had consented to organ donation and 7 were recruited from the community who were either adamantly or somewhat opposed to it. Some participants from the community group did not understand that organ donation occurs after death, and feared that being a declared organ donor would put them at risk of being denied medical treatment so that their organs could be recovered.

The qualitative interview participants also viewed and discussed a television spot that OneLegacy had previously produced but not yet broadcast. The HRSA grant enabled OneLegacy to use this ad in a paid media campaign, rather than in unpaid PSAs. It featured a little girl, with a voice-over narrative saying, "If your daughter needed a heart to live, and you could give her yours when you no longer needed it, would you? . . . And if it were your niece . . . or the daughter of a friend . . . or this child?" Three community participants misinterpreted this commercial as if they were being asked to die in order to donate their hearts to save the child. Their reactions informed a change in the language for the television spot, asking viewers to consider donating their hearts "when you die" instead of "when you no longer need it." Another modification was to explicitly ask viewers to call a toll-free number for more information about organ donation instead of just displaying the number on the television screen.

These interview findings helped OneLegacy to refine both the communication strategy for the grant project media campaign and its ongoing training with medical and hospital staff involved in the donor referral and request process (Frates & Bohrer, 2002). This qualitative research was both the impetus and the model for a national study of Hispanic markets throughout the United States, and subsequently informed a national media campaign by the Coalition on Donation, an alliance of national organizations and local affiliates that educates the public about organ and tissue donation (Weiss, 2003).

Media Campaign Description

The centerpiece of the intervention was a paid media advertising campaign employing Spanish language, culturally sensitive television and radio spots on the major Los Angeles stations. During the first project year (2001), the research consortium produced and aired one television spot and two 60-second radio spots, all in Spanish. The team subsequently produced two additional television spots in 30- and 60-second versions, in Spanish and English, to more fully address barriers to donation that the research team discovered from the qualitative research study.

The revised "Heart" commercial described above featuring the little girl was used in Project Year One (spring 2001) and the first flight of Project Year Two (fall 2001). In spring 2002 (Project Year Two) and in fall 2002 and spring 2003 (Project Year Three), two new television spots were aired. The first, "Saving," featured a boy putting a bandage on his sister's knee who grows up to become a physician informing a family that their relative may die unless an organ donor can be found. The

second, "To Live," portrayed a young patient awaiting an organ transplant recalling her childhood dreams and aspirations and expressing her current hope to live.

The ads were broadcast on stations with the highest Hispanic viewer and listener ratings and at prime viewing/listening times. A concluding "call to action" invited viewers to call the organ procurement agency's toll-free number for more information, and bilingual representatives were available to answer questions and mail out brochures and donor cards. In Project Year Two the consortium discontinued the radio ads as the Project Year One television spots generated five times the number of calls as the radio spots.

In April of each project year, to coincide with National Donor Awareness Week, OneLegacy held a press conference targeting Hispanic media organizations. These conferences generated invitations to participate in radio and television talk shows and a series of articles in the region's largest Spanish language newspaper. As well, the television and radio spots gained additional air time as a result of these press conferences and interviews.

Data Collection and Analysis

In each project year of this study, following the spring media flight, an independent sample of 500 Los Angeles Hispanics was surveyed, using the same sampling and data collection methods and the same questionnaire in each survey. The questionnaire consisted of a series of 12 questions: yes/no responses measured concept awareness, advertising awareness, and commercial recall, as well as whether respondents had obtained information about organ donation, made a personal decision to become an organ donor, and if they had informed family of their wishes. Structured questions covered attitudes toward organ donation on a 5-point scale (strongly/somewhat in favor, neutral, somewhat/strongly opposed) and six specific actions taken to gather information. Unique responses included other actions to learn more about organ donation and the number of immediate family members who have decided to become organ donors.

Households were selected independently for each wave by a hybrid sampling procedure combining random digit dialing (RDD) with interval selection by Spanish surname. Only self-identified Hispanics 18 and older were interviewed, one person per household. Approximately 80% of respondents completed the interview in Spanish. The St. Vincent Medical Center Institutional Review Board reviewed and exempted the project. Following the Code of Professional Ethics of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO), the identity of survey respondents was not disclosed to anyone not directly involved in research operations, and all identities were later purged from the data set.

Significance Testing, Measures, and Validity

The Z test was used to test the null hypothesis (that the experimental intervention had no effect) at the .05 level of significance or the 95% confidence level. As the Z test is applicable in testing of large samples ($N = 30$ or more), and the sample sizes in each survey wave comprised 500 respondents, no specific tests were performed to assess the normality of the distribution of the project samples (Mason, 1974). Subsets of fewer than 30 respondents were deemed ineligible for significance testing.

The pre-post research design employed for this project is commonly used to assess advertising effectiveness; measures of awareness and attitudes are taken before and after the appearance of the advertising intervention. The design was used for this project to provide a commercially acceptable benchmark of an advertising campaign using purchased rather than donated (PSA) media. It does not, and cannot, account for all possible influences on respondents' opinions and behaviors.

Objective Tracking Indicators

The national Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) data collection and reporting system was used to track and report organ donation consent rates by ethnicity throughout the project period.

To measure changes in declarations of intent, the researchers surveyed Hispanic residents of the Los Angeles designated market area (DMA) by telephone, using Synovate's proprietary *TeleNación* service. The media campaign phase of the project commenced with a baseline survey in January 2001. Postintervention tracking surveys were conducted following the spring media flights of radio and television advertisements promoting organ donation broadcast on Los Angeles Spanish radio and television stations in June 2001, May 2002, and May 2003.

The following terms are used in this report to define levels of engagement among the respondent population with respect to declarations of intent: "Deciders" means those who have made the personal decision to donate their organs at time of death but have not informed family of their wishes. "Declared donors" means those who have both made the personal decision to donate their organs at time of death and have informed family of their wishes. Thus, "deciders" represent a group at an earlier stage of change, and "declared donors" are another subset of respondents who have progressed to a further stage.

Results

The consent rate for organ donation by Hispanic families in the OneLegacy service area hospitals for Project Years Two and Three (federal fiscal years 2002 and 2003) exceeded project objectives, as shown in Table 1.

The advertising tracking phase of this study measured the impact of a paid advertising campaign to encourage Los Angeles Hispanics to learn more about organ donation; consider donating their organs at time of death; make the personal decision to donate organs at time of death; and inform family of their wishes and intentions.

As displayed in Table 2, measures of attitude and behavior met or exceeded project objectives in Project Year Two (2002), then declined in Year Three (2003). These results are examined in more detail in the following section.

Table 3 displays the overall demographics of the Project Year Three (2003) survey respondent population, as well as by level of engagement. Hispanic declared donors were slightly more likely ($P=.05$) to be at least 35, to have some college education, and to prefer to speak English. Otherwise, there were no significant demographic differences between declared donors, deciders, and the overall respondent population.

Table 4 summarizes key responses of advertising effect. Los Angeles area Hispanics indicated considerable familiarity with the concept of organ donation

Table 1. Hispanic media outreach campaign objectives and results: Organ donation consent rate, 2000–2003

| Indicator | Baseline 2000 | Project Year One (2001) results | Project Year Two (2002) objective | Project Year Two (2002) results | Project Year Three (2003) objective | Project Year Three (2003) results |
|--------------|---------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Consent rate | 32% | 48% | 37% | 55% | 42% | 57% |

Note: Project years correspond to the federal fiscal year, from October 1 to September 30.

Table 2. Media outreach campaign objectives and results: Organ donation attitude and behaviors, 2001–2003

| Indicator | Baseline Jan 2001 (<i>n</i> = 500) [#] | Project Year One (June 2001) results (<i>n</i> = 500) [#] | | Project Year Two (May 2002) objective results (<i>n</i> = 500) | | Project Year Three (May 2003) objective results (<i>n</i> = 500) | |
|--------------------------------|--|---|---------|---|---------|---|---------|
| | | no. (%) | no. (%) | no. (%) | no. (%) | no. (%) | no. (%) |
| Strongly favor organ donation, | 233 (52%) | 254 (57%) | 56% | 292 (58%) | 61% | 271 (54%) | |
| Have decided to be a donor, | 120 (27%) | 137 (31%) | 33% | 166 (33%) | 38% | 156 (31%) | |
| Have informed family, | 71 (16%) | 83 (19%) | 22% | 117 (23%) | 27% | 109 (22%) | |
| Signed donor card or carry ID, | 63 (14%) | 81 (18%) | 19% | 100 (20%) | 24% | 81 (16%) | |

[#]The actual number of respondents in each survey was 500. Weighting of responses to more closely match the age distribution of the Los Angeles Hispanic population, however, reduced the base number used for calculations to 450 in Project Year One.

Table 3. Comparative demographic profiles of respondents, Project Year Three (2003)

| Characteristic | All respondents (<i>N</i> = 500) | Deciders (<i>N</i> = 156) | Declared donors (<i>N</i> = 109) |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Male, no. (%) | 250 (50%) | 73 (47%) | 51 (47%) |
| Female, no. (%) | 250 (50%) | 83 (53%) | 58 (53%) |
| Age under 35, no. (%) | 246 (49%) | 63 (40%) | 43 (40%) |
| Age 35 and older, no. (%) | 253 (51%) | 93 (60%)* | 66 (60%)* |
| Median household income | \$20,350 | \$25,583 | \$25,950 |
| High school or less, no. (%) | 399 (80%) | 112 (72%) | 77 (71%) |
| College or higher, no. (%) | 93 (19%) | 42 (27%)* | 31 (29%)* |
| Spanish dominant, no. (%) | 377 (75%) | 103 (66%) | 68 (62%) |
| Bilingual, no. (%) | 67 (13%) | 25 (18%) | 19 (16%) |
| English dominant, no. (%) | 55 (11%) | 28 (18%)* | 22 (21%)* |

* $P < .05$.

Note: "Don't know/refused" responses not included when calculating percentages.

and exposure to advertising messages throughout the period of the study. As with the behaviors discussed above, attitudes toward organ donation improved in both Project Years One and Two (2001 and 2002), then declined slightly in Project Year Three (2003). There were significant gains in prompted advertising awareness in 2003 as compared with 2002 for television spots featuring a young girl and a physician; recall rates for both commercials rose by 8 percentage points, from 33% to 41% and from 28% to 36%, respectively.

In 2003, a probe was added to the survey for the subset of respondents ($n = 133$) who rated themselves as strongly in favor of the organ donation concept but who had not decided to donate their own organs. This probe was designed to better understand the reasons for these individuals' lack of action with respect to making decisions about both end-of-life issues and organ donation. About 70% of these respondents said they did not want to make the decision themselves or wanted to wait until they were at the point of death to decide. An important concentration of respondents (45%) expressed fear that medical personnel might deliberately withhold care from declared organ donors, indicating a profound distrust of the medical system. Figure 1 shows the percentage of respondents who agreed with various statements about death and organ donation.

Table 5 displays information on the small subset of respondents who had taken steps to gather information about organ donation in each project year. The most frequently named information sources were media, family, or friends. About a third of respondents said they read pamphlets or other materials from organ donation centers. Few had talked to doctors or other professionals about the subject, and even fewer had called an advertised 800 number.

Discussion

The Hispanic media campaign project achieved most but not all of its objectives over the 3-year project period. The Hispanic consent rate for organ donation exceeded the

Table 4. Organ donation (OD) awareness and attitudes among Los Angeles Hispanics, 2001–2003

| Indicator | Baseline | Project Year One | Project Year Two | Project Year Three |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | January 2001 (Base = 500)# | (June 2001) results (Base = 500)# | (May 2002) results (Base = 500) | (May 2003) results (Base = 500) |
| Heard of concept of OD, no. (%) | 347 (77%) | 344 (77%) | 377 (75%) | 383 (77%) |
| Saw or heard Spanish OD commercial, no. (%) | 239 (53%) | 258 (57%) | 248 (50%)* | 284 (57%)* |
| Recall little girl commercial, no. (%) | | | 164 (33%) | 206 (41%)* |
| Recall doctor commercial, no. (%) | | | 140 (28%) | 180 (36%)* |
| Strongly in favor of OD concept, no. (%) | 233 (52%) | 254 (57%) | 292 (58%)** | 271 (54%) |

#The actual number of respondents in each survey was 500. Weighting of responses to more closely match the age distribution of the Los Angeles Hispanic population, however, reduced the base number used for calculations to 450 in Project Year One.

*Value differs significantly from prior program year figure ($P = .05$).

**Value differs significantly from January 2001 preintervention baseline survey figure. ($P = .05$).

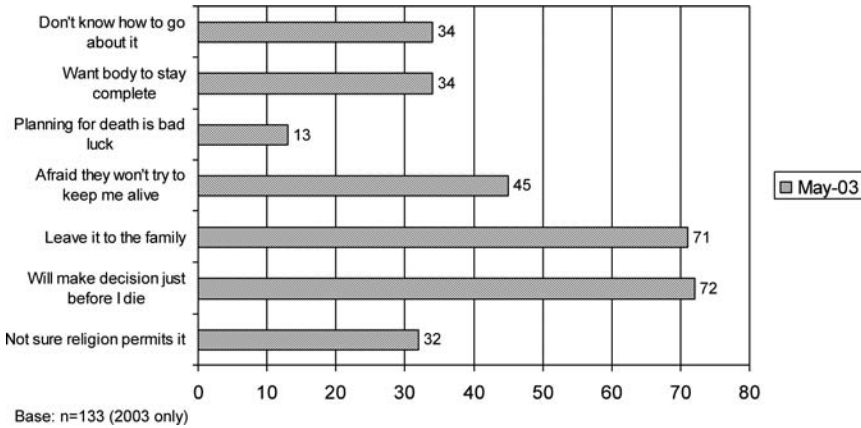


Figure 1. Attitudes underlying decisions about organ donation.

objective in both Project Year Two (2002) and Three (2003). Measures of attitudes, decisions, and behaviors related to organ donation met objectives in Project Year Two (2002), but not in Year Three (2003). There are several inter-related factors affecting these results, as well as several lessons to be learned from the experience of the research consortium.

Additional Influencing Factors

First, it is important to recognize that there is a constant flow of new Hispanic immigrants into the United States, and within the United States into new markets (Fix & Passel, 2001), resulting in a highly transient respondent pool. Most of these new immigrants have very low levels of education and minimal knowledge of the extremely complex U.S. health care system. Second, advertising impact typically peaks in the early stages of a campaign, followed by a plateau or flattening effect (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1990), so it is difficult to sustain an increase for an extended period of time. No further follow-up was possible, however, due to the time limitations of the grant.

The decline in key indicators from Project Year Two (2002) to Year Three (2003) may be associated with a lower response for prompted advertising recall for the new TV spots, "Saving" and "To Live," that aired in Project Years Two and Three (both featured physicians, so were referenced together as "doctor" commercials) compared with the "Heart" spot airing in Project Year One and the first flight of Project Year Two (fall 2001) featuring the young girl. The more memorable "Heart" ad that aired in Project Years One and Two may have had more influence on attitudes toward organ donation, decisions to donate, and discussions with families.

A potentially greater influencing factor may have been the worldwide publicity on the death from medical errors in February 2003 of heart transplant patient Jessica Santillan. The timing of this unfortunate event could not have been worse for the research consortium's Hispanic media campaign, as the third-year ads aired during February and March of 2003, and again in late April and May. The final *TeleNación* survey was conducted from May 27 to June 2, 2003. The Santillan family's

Table 5. Steps taken to gather information about organ donation, 2001–2003

| Information source | Baseline January 2001 | Project Year One | Project Year Two | Project Year Three |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Base = 40 | (June 2001) results Base = 53 | (May 2002) results Base = 69 | (May 2003) results Base = 48 |
| Saw media articles or features, no. (%) | 19 (47%) | 26 (49%) | 27 (38%) | 20 (41%) |
| Talked to family or friends, no. (%) | 14 (36%) | 23 (43%) | 24 (35%) | 20 (42%) |
| Read pamphlets or other materials from organ donation centers, no. (%) | 13 (33%) | 22 (41%) | 21 (31%) | 17 (36%) |
| Talked to professionals, no. (%) | 8 (20%) | 9 (17%) | 15 (22%) | 7 (14%) |
| Called 800 number, no. (%) | 3 (8%) | 3 (5%) | 1 (1%) | 2 (4%) |

undocumented immigration status fueled additional controversy in both Hispanic and general media, especially in Southern California.

The Santillan case raised public concerns about the fairness and effectiveness of the health care system, and illustrates the impact of negative publicity. Consumer behavior studies find that repetition of an advertising message enhances recall when competitive advertising is minimal or nonexistent, and that the repetition effect disappears under higher levels of competitive advertising. When the messages coming from an organization fail to match consumer expectations, then the public becomes confused, leading to a loss of trust in the organization or product and communication is subsequently much more difficult (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1990).

It should also be noted that during the 3-year grant period, the organ procurement agency engaged in many other activities to promote organ and tissue donation in the Hispanic community. These activities included obtaining the support of prestigious Hispanic leaders in business, religion, education, sports, and entertainment. The agency also recruited and trained additional bilingual and bicultural requesters during the grant period. These activities may have influenced both the organ donor consent rate and Hispanic community attitudes toward organ donation.

These confounding factors raise a number of questions about the results of the study and preclude definitive claims about the effectiveness of the paid media campaign. The improvement in measures of attitudes and behavior found in Project Years One (2001) and Two (2002) may be the result of the campaign, other efforts to promote organ donation awareness among Hispanics, or, more likely, both. The decline in Project Year Three may be the result of less effective ads, the negative publicity of the Santillan case, or both. The inflow of new immigrants to the service area is a constant that would negatively influence results throughout the study period, while other efforts to increase Hispanic organ donation would likely have an ongoing positive effect. Still, the study provided valuable learning for the agency and the larger organ and transplant community.

Lessons Learned

Measures of attitudes toward organ donation from this project suggest that many Los Angeles area Hispanics still harbor fears and misconceptions about organ donation. Even among those who strongly favor the concept of organ donation (but who have not yet made the personal decision to donate), almost half have fears that they would be allowed to die if they offered to be organ donors. These results indicate clear priorities for further educational efforts in the Hispanic community, not only to provide accurate information, but also to improve trust in the medical system. A number of interrelated factors explain why Hispanics report a lower level of satisfaction with the medical care they receive and less confidence in their physicians than do Whites or African Americans—having less choice of providers, more problems communicating with physicians, lower rates of insurance coverage, and higher reported experiences of physician disrespect compared with non-Hispanic Whites and African Americans (Blanchard & Lurie, 2004; Collins et al., 2002; Doty, 2003). Both the Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) have recommended including cultural competence training for clinicians in their initial and continuing medical education (Betancourt, Green, Carrillo, & Park, 2004).

Another finding of concern to the researchers is that so few respondents reported having talked to health care professionals about organ donation. Instead, they asked family and friends, who often give inaccurate information and perpetuate existing myths and misperceptions. As respected authority figures, physicians and other health professionals are the most credible source of information on organ donation and transplantation for both patients and the larger community, but for the Spanish dominant Hispanics responding to this survey they were a largely untapped resource—a finding that differs from the results of an earlier, much larger national study in which 75% of Hispanics reported obtaining health information from a physician or health provider (Brodie, Kjellson, Hoff, & Parker, 1999).

Health professionals in the community are particularly well positioned to begin the patient educational process. Examples of such actions include but are not limited to the following:

- Provide in-service training, including cultural sensitivity, to all levels of staff that have direct patient contact.
- Make literature about organ donation available in physician offices and clinics; encourage medical office staff to give and mention it to patients. Include organ donation as a topic in health education videos played in waiting rooms.
- Include a question about whether patients wish to be organ donors in the initial health assessment or patient registration and incorporate information about the discussion of organ transplantation and donation in their medical records.

The Hispanic media campaign research consortium found that a Spanish language paid advertising campaign does work, and that television is the most effective medium in the Hispanic community. Few organ procurement organizations have the resources, however, to conduct such campaigns—this project was only possible because of federal grant funding. One potential variation for a future paid media experiment in an era of increasingly limited resources might be to air advertising messages over a longer continuous time period.

The research consortium's experience also underscores the importance of conducting qualitative research to pretest and refine the advertising message with members of the target audience. The insights from these interviews helped to ensure the effectiveness of the television spots, and the small investment made by OneLegacy to fund the research enabled the agency to correct critical portions of the communication message.

The results of prior national studies of U.S. ethnic communities' attitudes and beliefs about organ donation and transplantation reflect the importance and benefits of public education in these communities. A 1990 study commissioned by the Association of Organ Procurement Organizations found that Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics all expressed favorable attitudes about being an organ donor, although minorities were less favorable than Whites, and that 61% of Blacks and 54% of Hispanics expressed more positive attitudes about organ donation and transplantation after completing the survey interview (Zavala & Gabriel, 1994). These authors recommended directly targeting populations that are less supportive of organ donations to improve donation rates. They also advised organizations conducting promotional campaigns to move beyond attempts to influence the intention to donate and to help individuals favoring organ donation to take action to carry out their intentions.

Researchers from Harvard Medical School and the Partnership for Organ Donation in Boston who conducted a telephone survey of almost 6,000 respondents in the late 1990s found that 31% of Hispanics reported willingness to donate their organs after death, a lower rate than for Whites (43%) but higher than that for African Americans (23%). Important correlations of willingness to donate among all three groups included (1) having discussed end-of life issues with family; (2) belief that physicians make every attempt to save patients' lives before considering them as candidates for organ donation; and (3) belief that organ donation does not disfigure the body. The latter consideration was significantly more prevalent among minority respondents (McNamara et al., 1999). Further analysis of this survey found that individuals expressed varying levels of commitment to organ donation by their behavior. Although more committed individuals were more likely to have signed an organ donor card, fewer than half of those who had expressed a wish to donate had made their wishes known to family (Guadagnoli et al., 1999).

Translating intention into action remains a continuing challenge for organ procurement organizations. As both these prior studies and the research reported in this article found, most of those who expressed support for the concept of organ donation have not discussed their beliefs with others, nor have those who have made the personal decision to donate declared their intentions to family, friends, or health professionals. This lack of action indicates a strong need for additional reminders of organ donation's value and importance on a continuing basis. For these Hispanics, and for the many Hispanic newcomers who enter the Los Angeles region every year, it is vitally important to continue effective programs of public education, information dissemination, and publicity—through many types of community-based organizations, not just health care providers, who serve Hispanics. The primary concerns of most new arrivals are obtaining employment and ensuring their own and their families' economic survival in a new and unfamiliar environment. Without an external stimulus, they would not have any reason to think about organ donation; and without positive information to counteract the myths and misinformation that abound in the culture, they are unlikely to think about it positively.

Future Research Recommendations

The results of both the surveys and the individual interviews indicate a need for further research and demonstration projects to address the following questions:

- What are the primary barriers that prevent individuals who have made the personal decision to donate their organs from discussing their decision with family?
- What can organ procurement organizations do to encourage family discussions about organ donation, particularly within ethnic minority communities?
- What are the most effective communication and information distribution channels within Hispanic and other minority ethnic communities?

Conclusion

The Hispanic media campaign project was designed to increase the percentage of Hispanic families that consent and individuals who declare intent to donate organs by disseminating culturally appropriate and replicable messages in the Hispanic

community. The Hispanic organ donation consent rate steadily increased throughout the study period. The results of a series of surveys to measure the impact of paid television and radio advertisements aired over a 3-year period show that although most respondents were aware of the concept of organ donation and also expressed favorable attitudes toward it, few took action to become organ donors. Some harbored unfounded fears that becoming a declared organ donor might lead to a medical decision to allow them to die.

These findings indicate a strong need for ongoing public education in the Hispanic community about the benefits of organ transplantation and donation and the integrity of the organ procurement system. Health care communication professionals have a vital role to play in this effort, both to provide credible patient education and to increase the level of trust in the U.S. medical system among Hispanics.

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