**PhD studentship – Ronan O’Carroll**

**Overcoming barriers to organ donation**

**Aims**

The aim of this studentship is to gain a deeper understanding of barriers to people registering as a posthumous organ donor. When asked 90% of the UK population say they support organ donation, in practice, only 38% have registered as an organ donor. Our group has demonstrated that emotions and affective attitudes may be acting as significant barriers to registration e.g. discomfort thinking about mortality, disgust, etc. The aim of the PhD would be to (a) further our understanding of barriers and (b) pilot interventions that may increase donor registration, e.g. reciprocity primes.

**Theoretical Importance**

Most work on increasing the organ donor pool has focused on facts or evidence via education campaigns etc. Our group has demonstrated that **feelings** may be more important barriers than **facts**. Specifically, affective attitudes may be acting as significant barriers to registration e.g. discomfort with thinking about mortality, disgust, etc.

**Possible outside funders**

NHS, NHSBT, Chief Scientist office

**Impact**

In the UK, 3 people per day die while waiting for an organ transplant. The ultimate aim of this research would be to develop theoretically informed interventions that would lead to an increase in organ donor registrations. This would be a rare example of a theoretically based psychological intervention leading to lives being saved.

**References**

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O'Carroll, R. E., Ferguson, E., Hayes, P. C., & Shepherd, L. (2012). Increasing organ donation via anticipated regret (INORDAR): protocol for a randomised controlled trial. *BMC Public Health*, *12*(1), 169.