

Performance Feedback Interventions Increase Organ Donor Registrations



Organ donation is a critical public health issue worldwide, with a significant gap between the number of people needing transplants and the available organs. In Canada, thousands of patients remain on waiting lists each year, and many die waiting for a transplant. Despite broad social support for organ donation, registration rates remain low. [An article recently published in the Journal of Health Economics](#) explores the findings of a field experiment that studied the effects of performance feedback on customer service representatives (CSRs) in Canada, aiming to increase organ donor registrations through repeated feedback interventions.

The Role of CSRs in Organ Donor Registration

CSRs at ServiceOntario centres play a pivotal role in organ donor registration, as they interact with individuals during various transactions, including health insurance registration. Despite being in a unique position to promote organ donation, CSRs have traditionally lacked performance feedback related to this task. The field experiment involved 694 CSRs across 82 offices and tested whether providing these employees with feedback about their organ donor registration performance could increase signups.

The study divided CSRs into three groups: a control group that received standard reminders, a group that received individual feedback on their performance, and a third group that received both individual feedback and regional benchmark comparisons. The results showed that providing performance feedback led to a significant increase in daily organ donor registrations, with the most substantial effects observed shortly after the feedback was delivered.

The Impact of Performance Feedback

The experiment revealed that providing performance feedback to CSRs increased organ donor registrations by approximately 11% compared to the control group that received only standard reminders. The feedback was particularly effective immediately after being provided, with its impact persisting for several months. Interestingly, adding regional benchmark information did not significantly alter the effect of individual performance feedback, suggesting that simply making CSRs aware of their performance is a powerful motivator.

The study also highlighted that the feedback was effective across all levels of initial performance. Both high-performing and low-performing CSRs increased their registration rates when provided with feedback. This finding contradicts the concern that performance feedback might demotivate low performers or lead high performers to reduce their efforts. Instead, it suggests that feedback can universally enhance motivation and performance in prosocial tasks like organ donor registration.

Long-Term Effects and Implications

One of the study's key strengths was its long-term design, which allowed researchers to track the effects of feedback over multiple waves and an extended period. The study found that while the initial impact of feedback was strong, there was a slight decline in effectiveness with successive communications. This could be due to CSRs becoming accustomed to the feedback or reaching a performance ceiling, where further improvements were harder to achieve.

However, the persistence of the feedback's effect indicates that periodic performance evaluations can sustain higher levels of prosocial behaviour over time. For public agencies and organisations aiming to increase organ donation rates, this suggests that implementing a system of regular feedback could be an effective strategy to motivate employees and enhance outcomes.

Conclusion

The findings from this field experiment provide valuable insights into how performance feedback can be used to increase organ donor registrations. By simply informing CSRs about their performance, the study achieved a significant increase in registration rates, demonstrating the power of feedback in motivating prosocial behaviour. For policymakers and public health officials, these results underline the importance of considering behavioural interventions, like performance feedback, in efforts to address the organ donation gap. As countries continue to grapple with organ shortages, such strategies could play a crucial role in saving lives and improving public health outcomes.

Source: [Journal of Health Economics](#)

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