

Preventing harm to families after failed attempts at Organ Donation after Cardiac Death with the use of a Grab Bag

Lee Edwards (BSc HONs, PgDip, RN) and Ruth Kitching (BSc HONs, PgDip, RN)



Introduction

Working in a Neurosciences Critical Care Unit, we often have patients that suffer catastrophic brain injury, some of these succumb to their injuries, however as they have made it from the scene of their initial injury, they may have the potential to go on to become an organ donor through one of the organ donation pathways.

Method

We started by undertaking a Qualitative questionnaire about Organ Donation on our unit.

- Sent to band 5,6 and 7 staff
- Was online and anonymous
- Open for three months to allow for responses

Results

Currently we have been unable to acquire substantial formative results to know if this has prevented harm to relatives. This is due to the ever-changing patient group within the unit. Most patients who have followed the Donation after Circulatory Death route have all died within 4 hours. However, the verbal feedback from the staff who have taken this pack with them to theatre have been positive.

Conclusions & Discussions

Although we have not had much formal feedback on the idea, the verbal feedback that we have received has been very positive. We found staff are often put on the spot, they began sharing previous experiences where they have been unable to locate items in an unfamiliar theatre environment.

This idea came about due to the inability to locate items when you are in theatre with a patient who has not died within 4 hours. The patient's relatives at times have highlighted that it has caused them distress returning to the unit where they were told that their loved one will die from their injury. Therefore, with the items in this bag the aim was to prevent the need to return to the intensive care unit and causing more distress at one of the hardest times.

Looking forward

- Allow for data collection so we can assess the long-term outcome
- Aim to add controlled drugs to the bag, which would involve a policy on this to be written

Do you think it would DCD grab bag, which would have items which would help care for the patient, help prevent harm to families?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Unsure

Key Messages

Be prepared!
Preparing the relatives that the process is not always successful
Exemplary Donor care

**BACCN
Conference
2025
6th & 7th
October
Blackpool**