

# Knowledge and Attitudes of Nurses Towards Tissue Donation in Singapore – A Tertiary Hospital Survey

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## BACKGROUND:

In Singapore, human tissue (i.e. heart valve, skin and vascular tissues) donation is governed under the Medical (Therapy, Education and Research) Act (MTERA). A successful tissue donation (TD) process involves coordination led by Transplant Coordinators (TCs) and is complemented by support from nurses and doctors. Although nurses have a key role to play in the TD workflow (e.g. referring potential donors), there is scant literature on their knowledge and attitudes towards TD in Singapore. This study aims to bridge this information gap and review their involvement in the TD process.

## METHODS:

From 2014 to 2017, a survey was conducted among nurses (n=1293) from two tertiary hospitals in Singapore. The contents were designed to assess their demographics, attitudes, and knowledge; their willingness to be proactively involved in the TD process. Statistical analysis: SPSS Statistics 25 – Pearson Chi-Square Test, Independent T-test, Cross-tabulation

## RESULTS:

### Knowledge

32.4% of the participants have heard of the MTERA. There were no significant correlation between age, race, and religion when compared to their level of knowledge on TD. Nurse Clinicians (NCs), possesses significantly higher knowledge than other designations (non-managerial) at 67.7% ( $p < 0.05$ ). 73.0% did not have prior TD education from school and they were significantly less knowledgeable about TD than those who did.

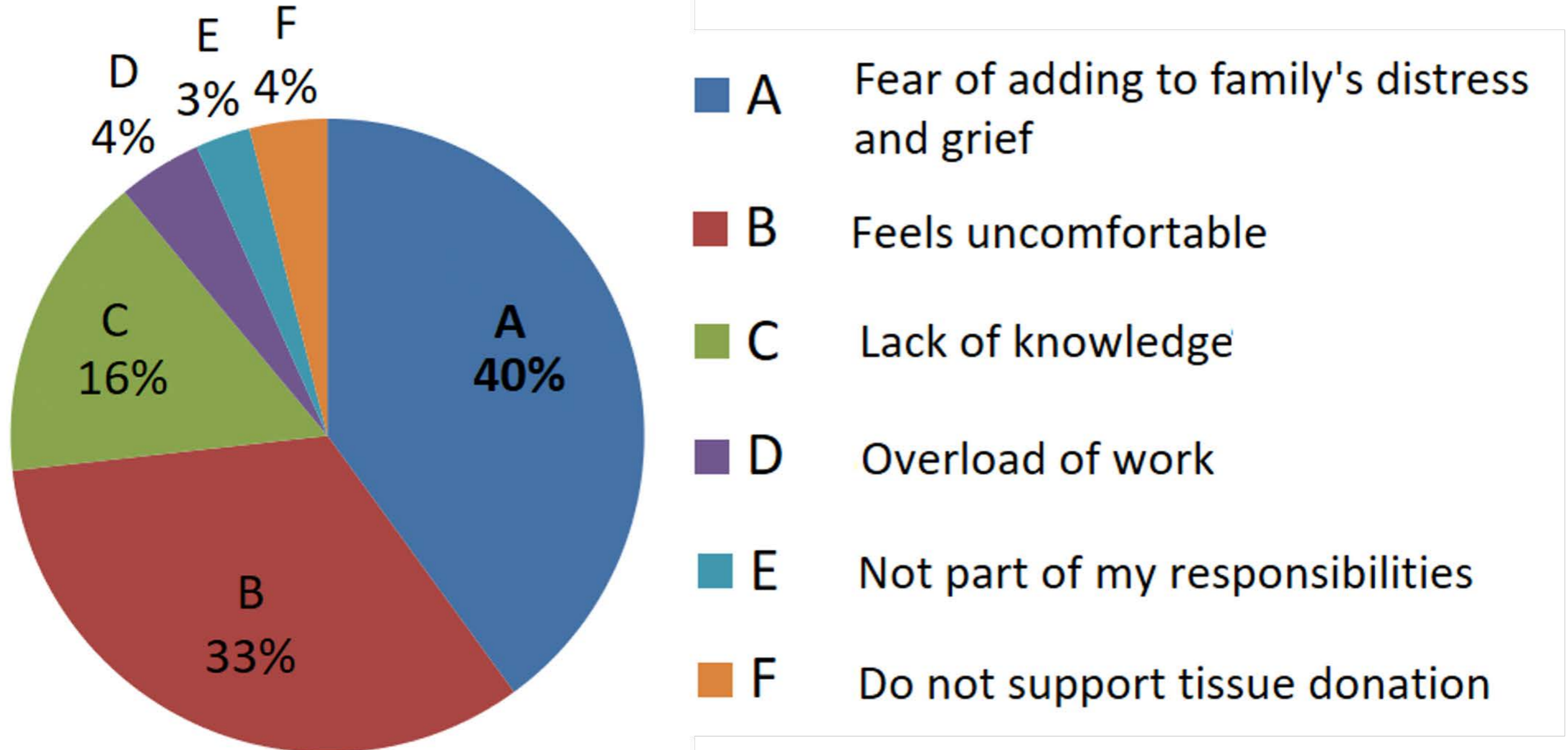
### Attitudes

59.7% of the nurses were in favour of TD, with their designation and religion having a significant correlation with being in favour of TD – 72.9% of the NCs and 71.9% of Catholic/Christian holding the highest percentage. 55.7% of nurses were willing to take part in the TD process but only 10.6% of them were comfortable with approaching deceased family for TD, where the most rated concern was “fear of adding to family's distress and grief”.

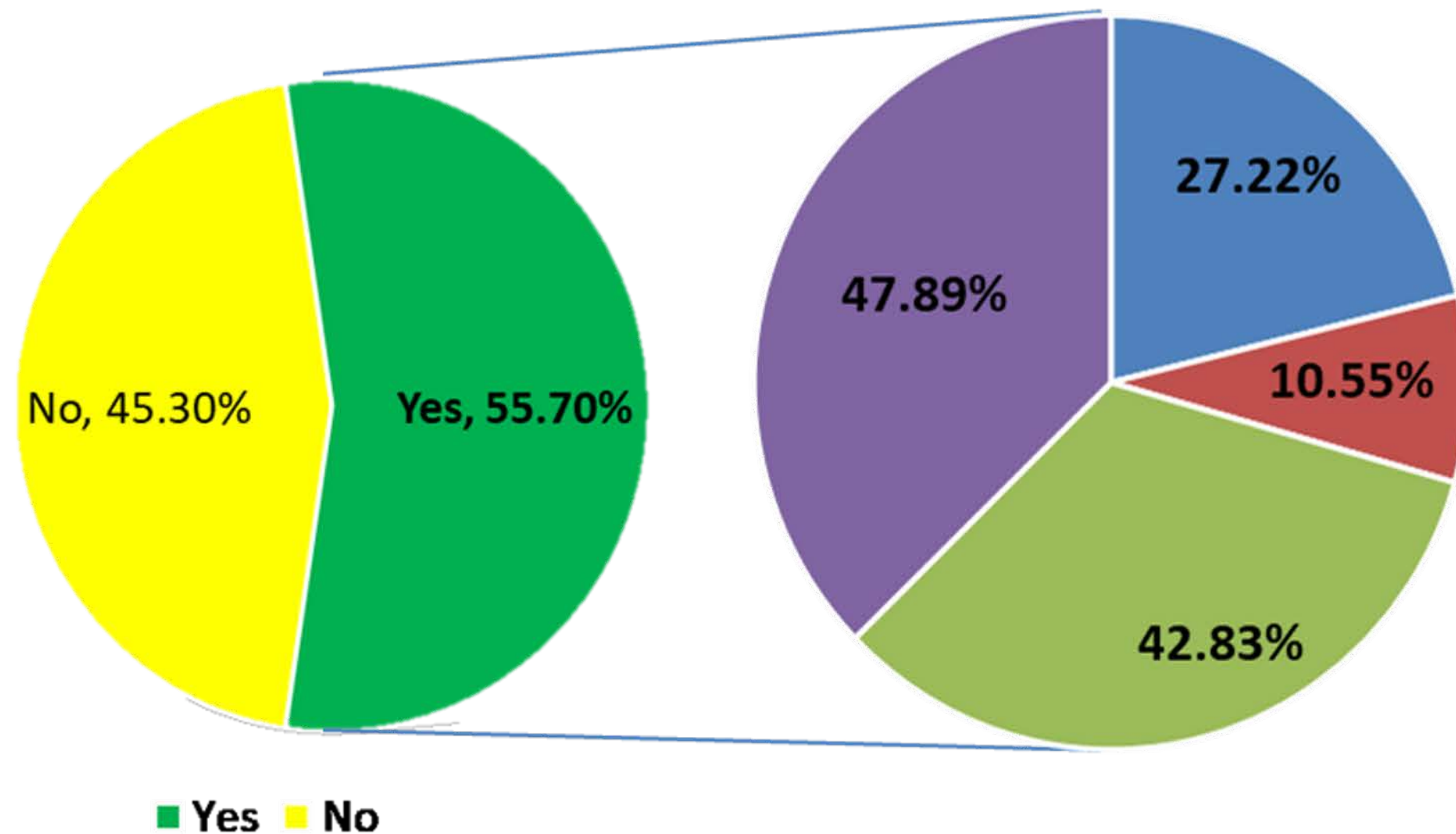
## CONCLUSIONS:

The nurses surveyed were mostly supportive of TD and were willing to be part of the tissue donation process. General knowledge of TD was relatively low among nurses. This can however, be improved through introduction of TD into formal education. Nurses were the most intimidated with broaching the topic of TD with the potential deceased donor's family likely due to the lack of grief management skills. Nurses should be given more top-down support to overcome their perceived barriers and lack of knowledge. Having well-defined roles for the nurses in TD may also reduce the ambiguity they face on-the-job.

# Reasons for not being comfortable to approach deceased's family for tissue donation upon death



# Would you be willing to play a part in tissue donation?



- Approaching family of the deceased and giving them brochures about tissue donation
- Broaching the topic of tissue donation to family of the deceased
- Informing doctor in-charge of patient to broach topic of tissue donation to family of the deceased
- Activating Transplant Coordinator while keeping the family of the deceased informed about the wait