

Increasing organ donor registration among men



About this report

Increasing donor registration is a key opportunity to save more lives through organ donation. Men, in particular, have been a persistently difficult demographic group to engage in the Upper Midwest; in Minnesota, only 51% of men are currently registered donors.

In 2023, [LifeSource](#) partnered with [5IVE](#) to uncover what's preventing men from signing up as donors. This research-based report includes data and insights that help better understand what's at the root of this donor registration gender disparity. Historically, there have been many theories as to why men register at lower rates, yet an organized, formal research effort to learn about the issue directly from unregistered men had not been previously undertaken. The data set in this report provides for the first time an objective view of the hesitations, barriers and potential motivators that unregistered men have when it comes to registering as organ donors.

The research utilized polling conducted by [Brandata](#) using the Pollfish platform. Funding was provided through a grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety as part of the state's You & \$2 program that allows Minnesotans to donate \$2 or more to organ donation education when they apply for or renew their driver's license or motor vehicle registration.

About LifeSource

LifeSource is the non-profit organization dedicated to saving lives through organ, eye and tissue donation in the Upper Midwest, serving more than seven million people in communities across Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. One of 56 organ procurement organizations (OPOs) in the United States, LifeSource is relentlessly pursuing a day when no one dies waiting for a life-saving transplant.

Learn more at life-source.org.

About 5IVE

5IVE is an independent, woman-owned, social-impact creative agency specializing in brand development and communication strategy, design, digital activations, philanthropy and thought leadership. Founded in 2010, 5IVE is on a mission to partner with industry and policy leaders, teams and communities around the globe to develop innovative solutions that solve the complex issues of today and build better systems for human progress tomorrow.

Learn more at 5ivempls.com.

Methodology

LifeSource, through the You & \$2 grant and in collaboration with 5IVE, commissioned this research study from Brandata in the third quarter of 2023, and data collection took place between September 13, 2023 and October 31, 2023. Two online surveys were deployed via the online platform Pollfish: one study assessed the opinions and attitudes of unregistered men, and a similar, separate study assessed the opinions and attitudes of registered men and women for comparison. Women were specifically included in the study in order to compare trends across gender lines and assess their perceptions and role as influencers in men's lives.

Survey respondents were recruited from **Minnesota, ages 18+, with a total of 851 participants** in the following breakdown. The goal was to recruit an equal number of participants from each group, however unregistered men proved a particularly challenging group to engage and further demonstrates the challenges in reaching this demographic. Survey collection for unregistered men eventually slowed to the point that it was projected to take several additional months to collect the remaining surveys. The decision was made to stop collection because of the quality of the completed surveys and belief that additional survey collection wouldn't substantially change the overall themes and trends. **The overall margin of error (MoE) is 3% at a 90% confidence level; MoE varies by gender.**



Registered men: n = 336



Registered women: n = 336



Unregistered men: n = 179

Table of Contents

	About this report.....	2
	Methodology.....	3
	Introduction	5
	Executive summary	6
1	Questions for unregistered men only	8
2	Questions for registered donors only.....	13
3	Questions for all respondents	20
4	Reactions to visuals & messaging	31
5	Conclusion	41

Organ donation registration survey



In the United States, more than 100,000 people are waiting for a life-saving organ transplant (source: [OPTN](#)), far outnumbering the availability of donated organs. The need is so dire that **16 people die each day while waiting, and every eight minutes another person joins the transplant list**. It can appear an insurmountable equation, with donation agencies across the country working tirelessly to tip the scales toward saving more lives. A single donor can save and heal more than 75 lives through organ, eye and tissue donation and so the answer to saving more lives lies with increasing the number of people willing to make this selfless gift after they pass away.

According to the [2019 National Survey of Organ Donation Attitudes and Practices](#), 90.4% of adults in the United States support organ donation, yet 50% of respondents are not registered as organ donors. This is consistent with actual organ donor registration rates reported by donation agencies across the country. Minnesota's organ procurement organization, [LifeSource](#), reports a state [registration rate](#) of 56% with an additional disparity between genders year over year; while the 2023 registration rate for women was 58%, the rate for men was just 51%. Historically, gender has emerged as a consistent factor impacting the rates at which individuals commit to organ donation through donor registration.

What prevents men from registering at higher rates? That's the underlying question at the root of this first of its kind study to understand registration hesitancy among men. Registering to be an organ donor is a deeply personal decision, and understanding the variables that influence this choice is important for developing targeted strategies to bridge the gap.

Further fueling the focus on men and the need to increase their registration rates is the fact that men are:

- Overrepresented on the transplant waiting list, at **62% of people waiting** (source: OPTN);
- Comprise **60% of people who have died waiting** for a transplant since record keeping began (source: OPTN);
- **20% more likely to meet organ donation criteria** after death (source: LifeSource).

In short, men have a greater chance of both needing an organ transplant and being a potential organ donor, yet fewer are participating in the system through donor registration. In this study, we've identified some of the factors that prevent men from registering, what is top of mind, and what would help them make a more informed decision. The study results also show that about 10% of unregistered men are likely to register and just haven't yet taken action. The ultimate goal of this report is to provide insights into why men do and do not register, guide public communication and engagement, and increase the rate of registration among men, in particular, to save more lives.



SURVEY RESULTS

Executive summary

In the fall of 2023, a first of its kind study was conducted to better understand the dynamics of organ donation attitudes, perceptions and barriers among unregistered men, with a companion study conducted with registered men and women for comparison and additional insights.

Unregistered men were asked questions about their own experiences, considerations, barriers and perspectives on organ donation and donor registration, while registered men and women were asked both about their experiences and to share what they think might be the biggest barrier men, as a whole, have to donor registration. Participants were also provided some visual examples of advertising to gauge their responses.

Over the course of almost two months, 851 participants contributed to this study, resulting in the following prevailing trends and insights.

Key takeaways



Disparities exist between perceived and actual knowledge

Despite a larger percentage of men claiming to be extremely familiar with the organ donation process, their responses lacked the depth and personal connection that women's answers reveal, suggesting a disparity between perceived knowledge and actual experience. Men report being more likely to learn about organ donation later in life and through healthcare professionals, which may contribute to their increased confidence.



Variable registration patterns unfolded

While the DMV remains the dominant platform for women to register as organ donors, men display a more diversified and prolonged registration path, frequently reporting turning to online platforms and health-related occasions later in life. That said, DMV data shows that the majority of both men *and* women register to be donors when they receive their driver's license. What accounts for this difference is likely a projection that men would like to register as a donor in partnership with a healthcare professional versus how they actually documented their decision. In other market research environments, participants often express uncertainty about their status as registered organ donors or where that can happen.



A little information goes a long way

The majority of unregistered men are on the fence and become more likely to register with only a small amount of education. Prior to watching a short educational video about the donation process, 10% of men rated themselves as a 9/10 or 10/10 in terms of likelihood to register as a donor. Post-video, rates jumped to 25% of men rating themselves as a 9/10 or 10/10 in terms of likelihood to register as a donor.



Saving lives is the most impactful message

The message "One donor can save and heal more than 75 lives" stands out as the most compelling message about organ donation for both men and women, capturing the attention of more than 50% of both genders, regardless of registration status.

The second most compelling creative message is "Remember to check the box on your ID / Reduce the waiting list," indicating both a strong association between donor registration and the DMV and the callout to reduce the number of people waiting for a transplant.

SECTION 1

Questions for unregistered men only

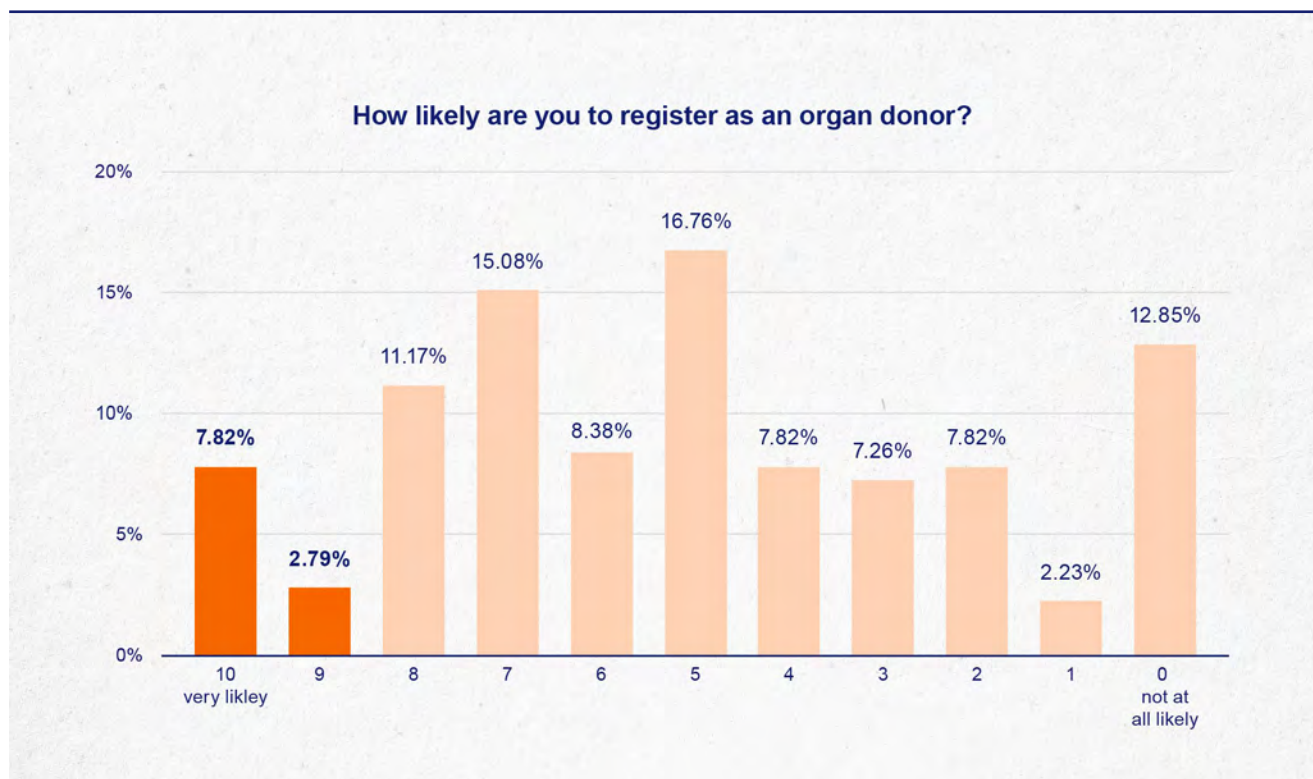


Registration likelihood

Respondents were asked their likelihood to register as a donor as a baseline at the beginning of the survey. **An important 10.61% of men responded that they are very likely to register as a donor.** There is also

a visible peak between the ratings of five and eight percent, indicating a slim majority (51%) are on the fence. A noticeable cohort of outliers with a rating of zero or one are not at all likely to register as a donor.

Figure 1

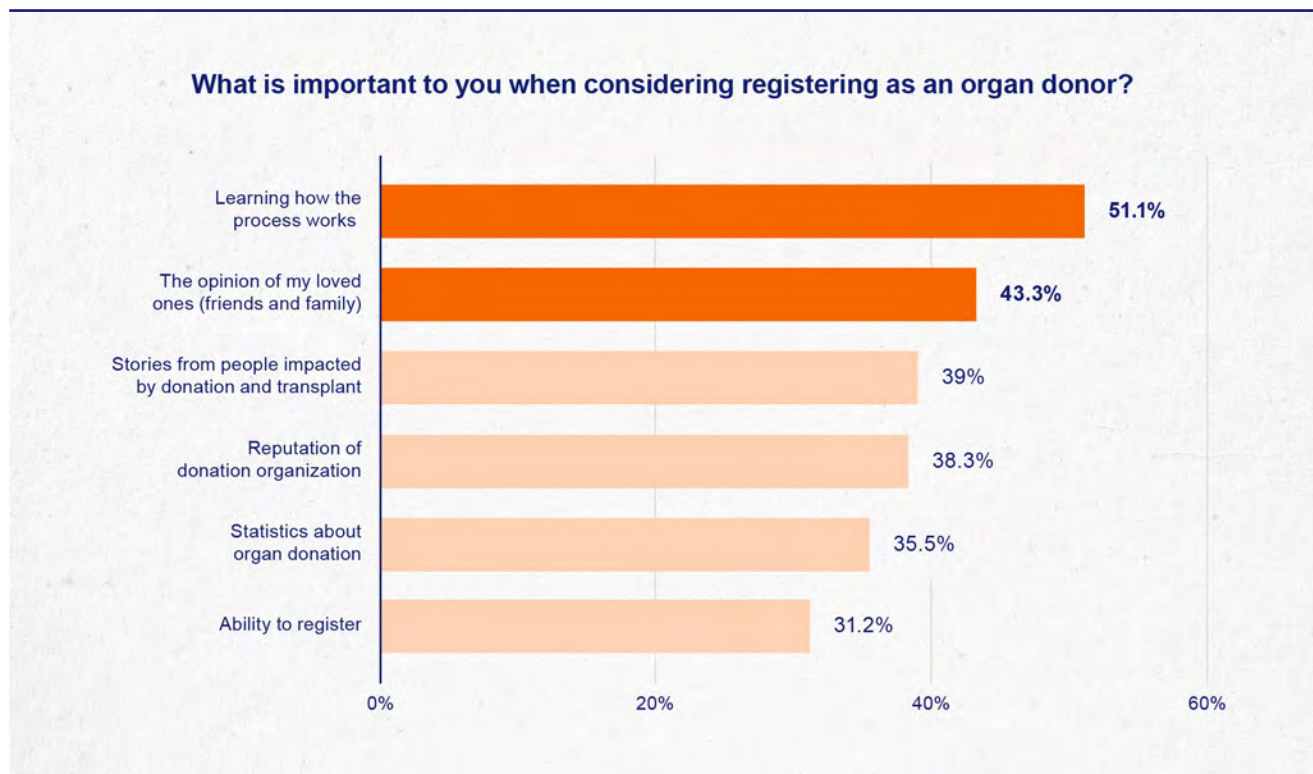


Organ donation considerations

Understanding the factors unregistered individuals evaluate when considering donor registration is important to knowing how to best conduct outreach.

The data indicates the importance of both educational and emotional appeals; initiatives that demystify the process and leverage the influence of family and friends could be effective. Furthermore, sharing compelling stories from those affected and maintaining a reputable image are also significant.

Figure 2



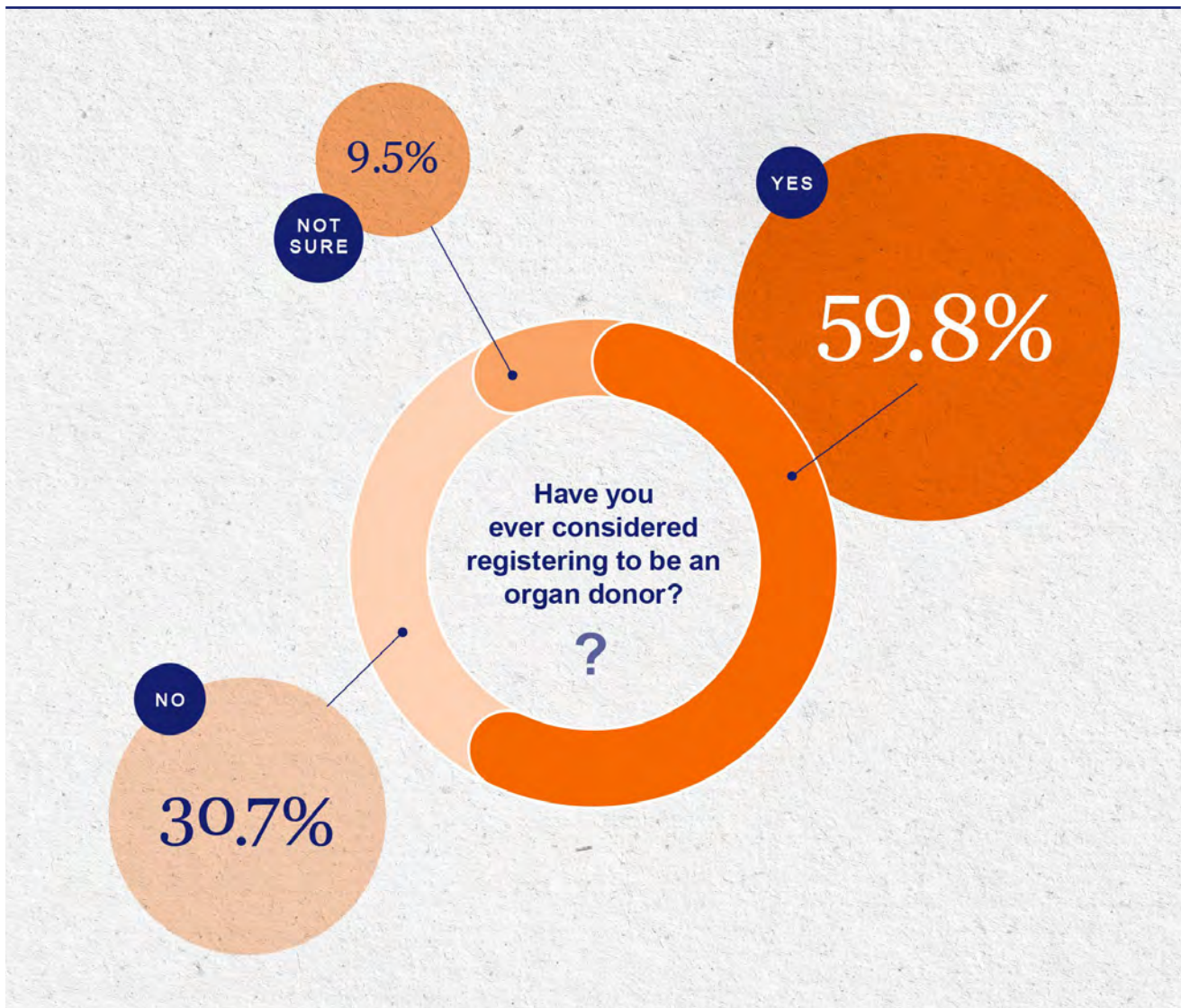
- The leading factor influencing consideration for organ donation registration is **understanding the process**, with a little over half (51.1%) stating its importance.
- **Opinions of loved ones also plays a significant role**, with 43.3% of respondents valuing their views, suggesting a **strong social influence on the decision-making process**.
- **Personal stories from those affected by organ donation are important** to 39.0% of respondents, highlighting the **impact of emotional narratives**.
- The reputation of the donation organization matters to 38.3%, indicating that **trust and credibility are key to decision-making**.
- **Concrete data and statistics** influence 35.5% of potential registrants, while the **ease of online registration** is a factor for 31.2%.

Registration consideration

The majority of unregistered men have considered registering as organ donors, with a significant portion still undecided, indicating potential for increased registration through targeted information and assurance.

Tailoring messages to address common uncertainties and highlighting the ease and impact of registration may serve to reduce the number of undecided individuals and increase overall donor registration rates.

Figure 3

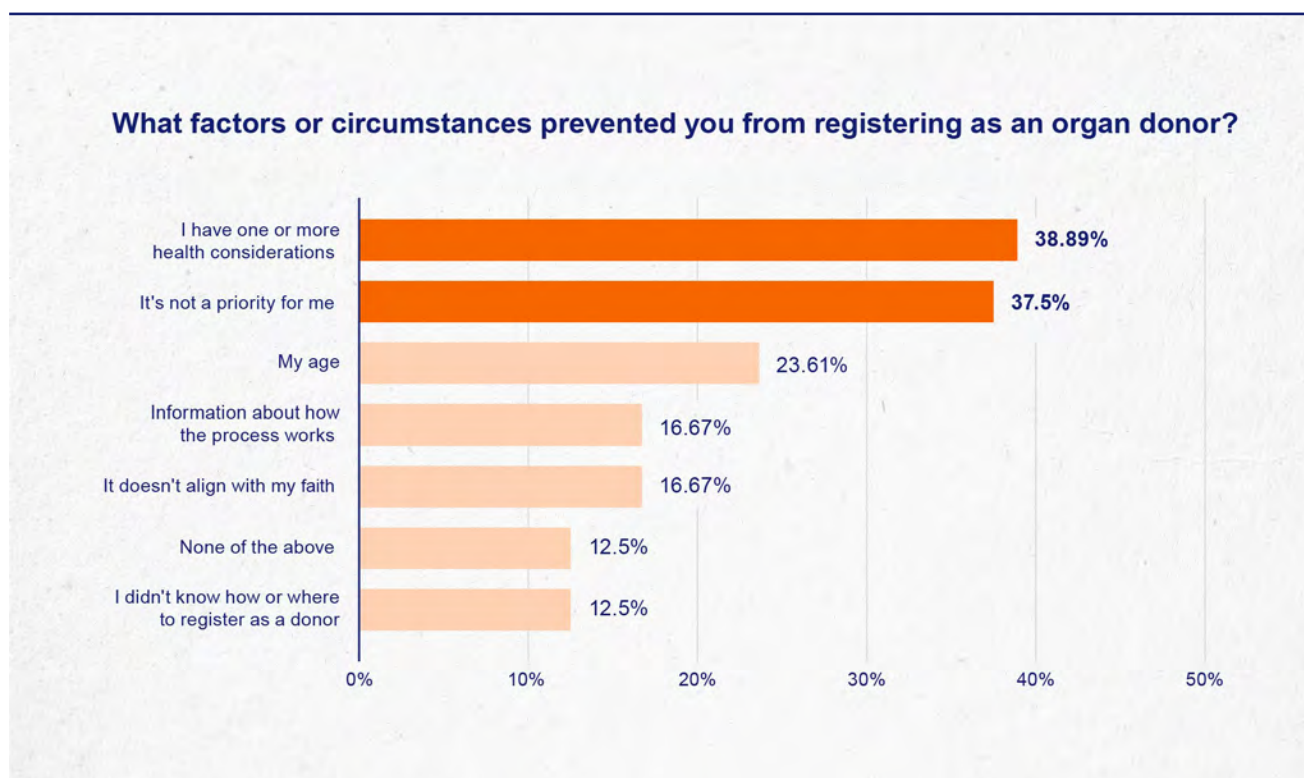


Registration barriers

Health concerns and personal prioritization emerge as the primary barriers to organ donor registration, indicating areas where targeted messaging could make a significant impact. Clarifying that people with health conditions can

often still be donors and providing broader access to information around the importance of organ donation might shift perceptions and allow those who are hesitant to make educated decisions.

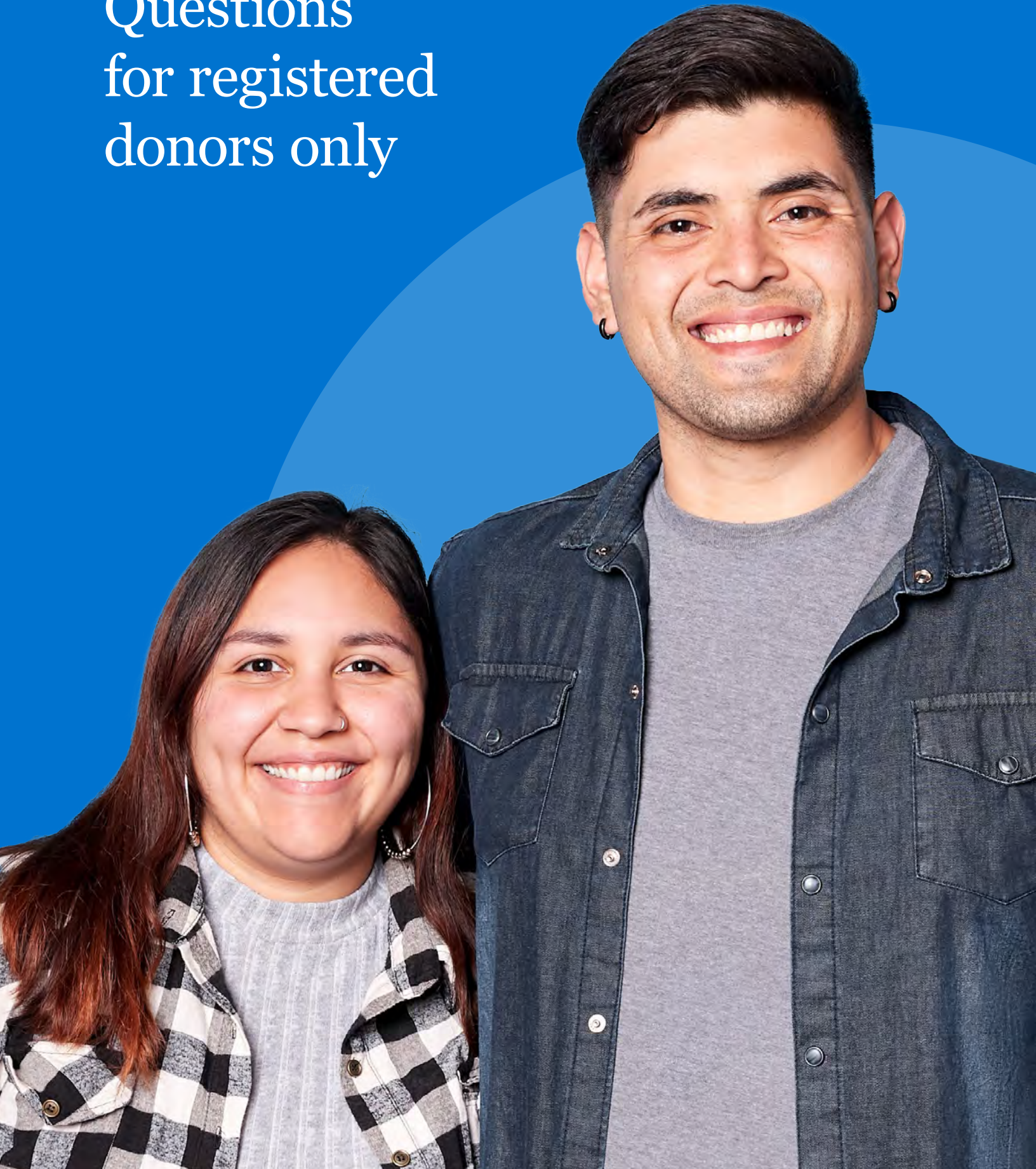
Figure 4



- **Health considerations are the most cited barrier**, with 38.89% of men identifying them as a reason for not registering, suggesting a need for clarity on eligibility criteria.
- Nearly the same proportion of men (37.5%) indicate that organ donation is not a priority for them, which could be an **issue of awareness or perceived relevance**.
- Age is a concern for 23.61%, pointing to **possible misconceptions about donor age restrictions**.
- **Lack of information on the process and religious misalignments** each account for 16.67% of the responses, highlighting opportunities for education and faith-based community engagement.
- A small segment (12.5%) reported not knowing how or where to register, signaling the **need for improved communication on registration methods**.

SECTION 2

Questions for registered donors only

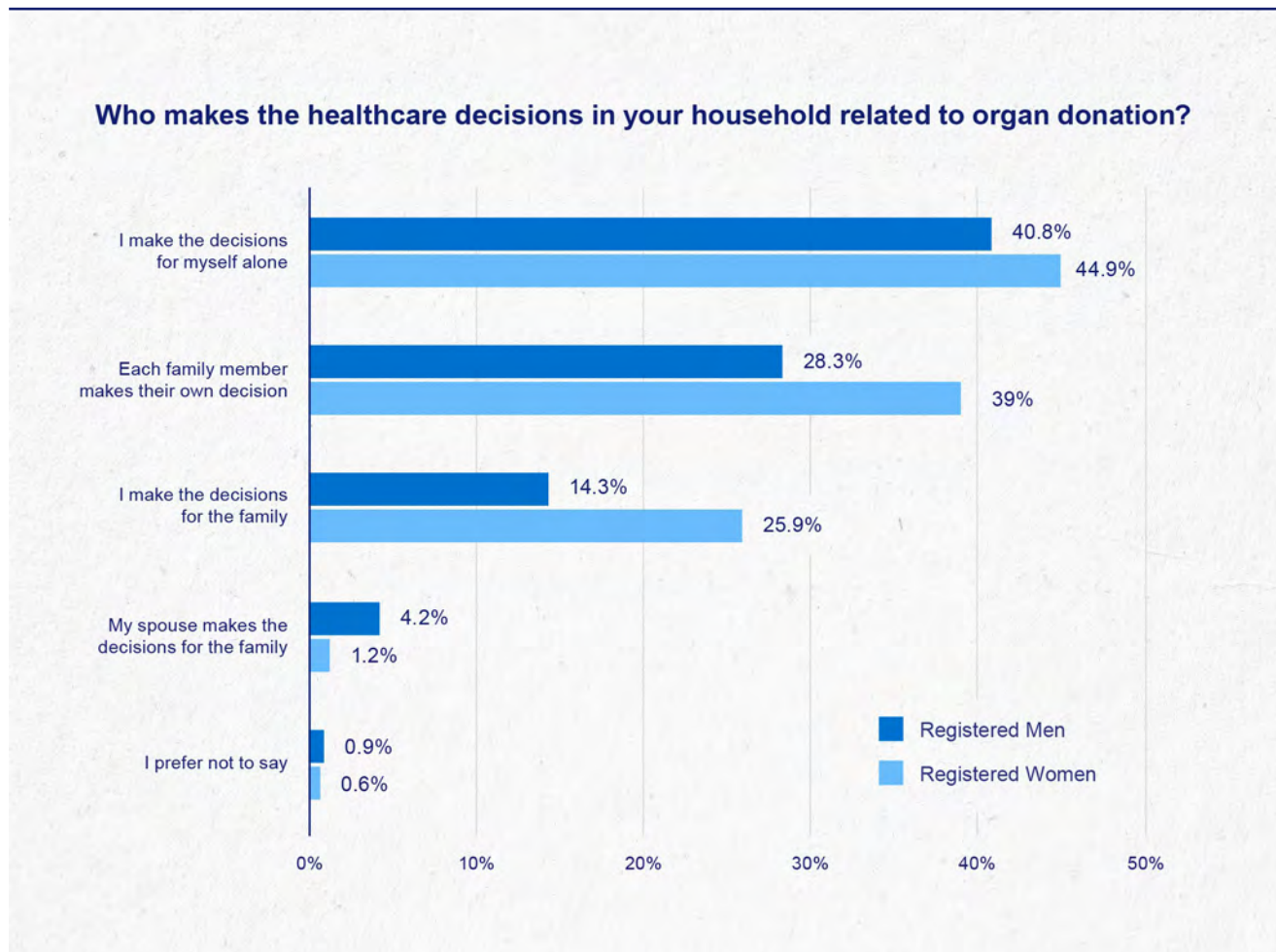


Healthcare decision-making

Understanding who makes the healthcare decisions related to organ donation can help shed light on how to best reach individuals who are not yet registered.

The vast majority of people make their own healthcare decisions, but there are some differences between men and women.

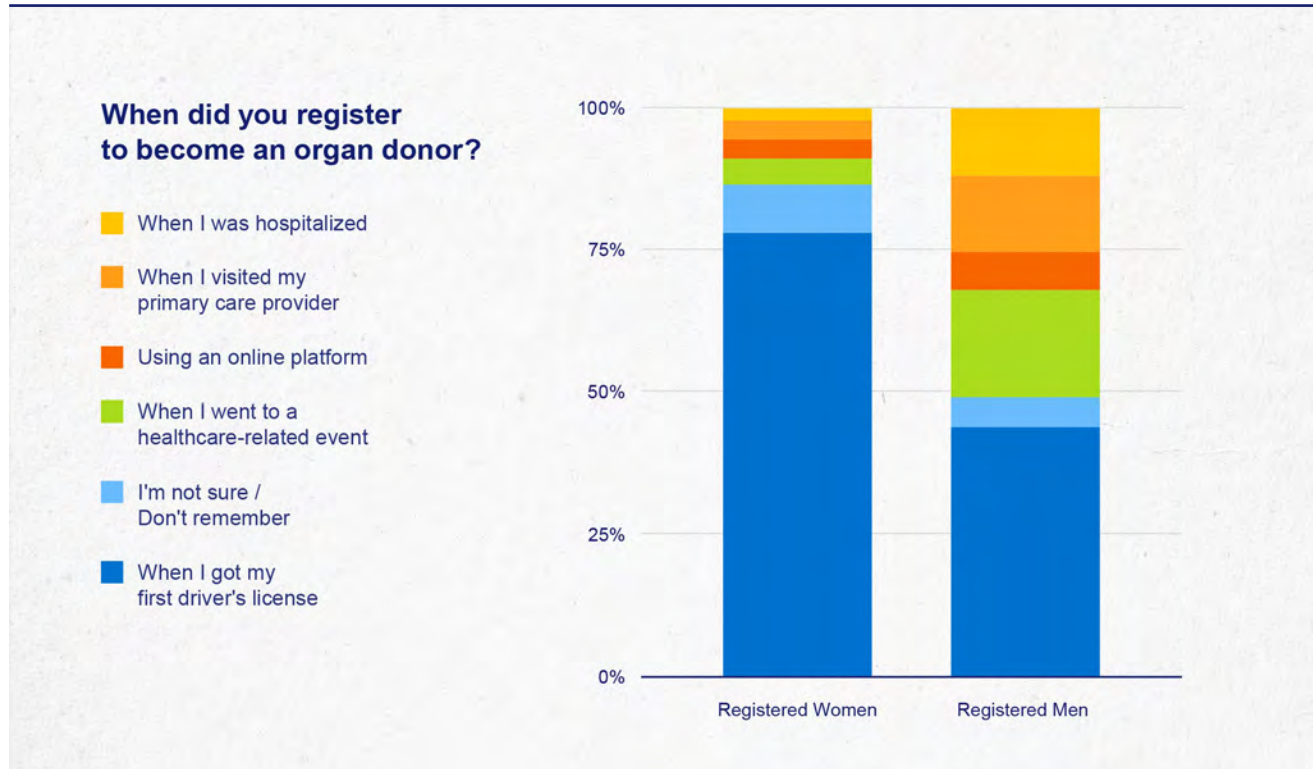
Figure 5



- I make the decisions for myself alone:** More women (44.9%) than men (40.8%) reported making organ donation decisions independently.
- Each family member makes their own decision:** A higher percentage of women (39%) allow each family member to decide compared to men (28.3%).
- I make the decisions for the family:** More men (25.9%) make decisions for the entire family compared to women (14.3%).
- My spouse makes the decisions for the family:** A smaller fraction from both genders opt for this.
- I prefer not to say:** A minor portion of both genders chose not to disclose their decision-making process.

Registration timing

Figure 6



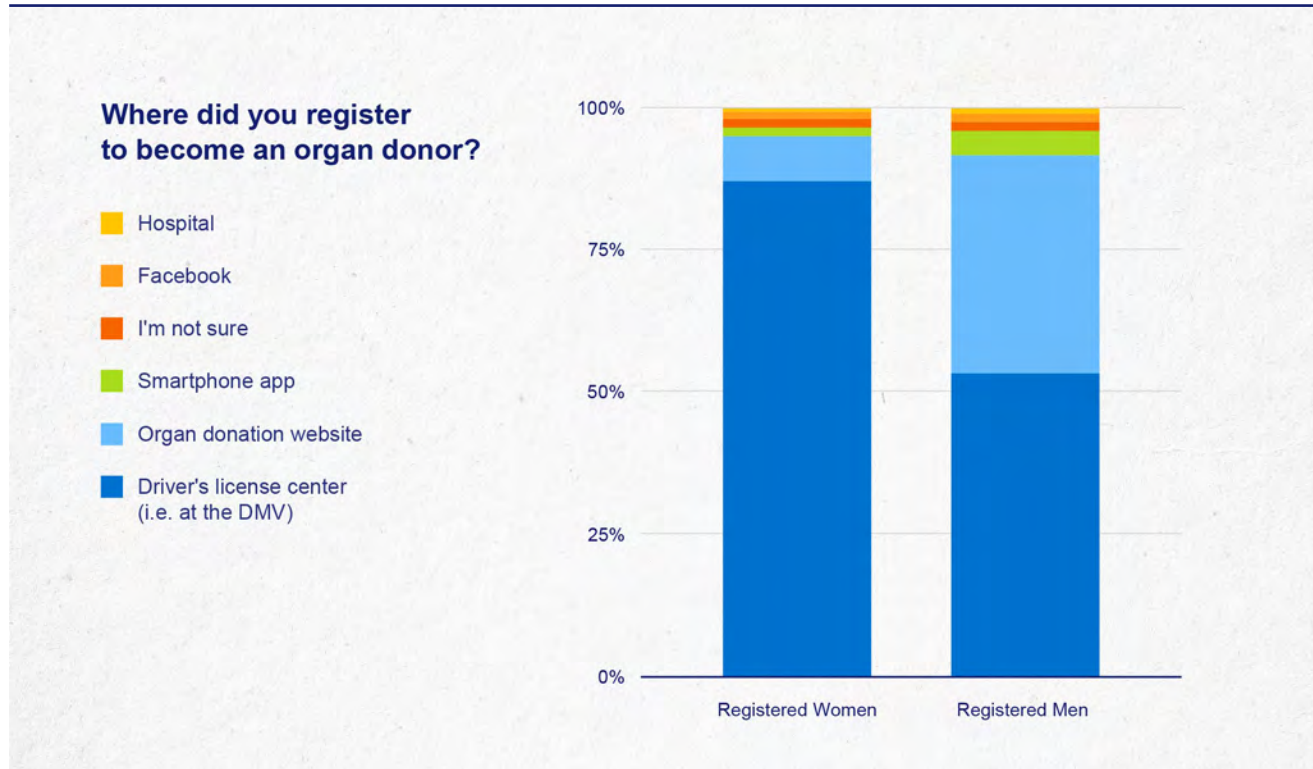
The primary occasion for registering as an organ donor for a majority of both genders was when they received their first driver's license; however, the percentage was significantly higher for women than for men.

The data suggests that women are ready to commit to organ donation earlier in life, while men hold out until later - generally when they experience a healthcare-related event.

- A vast majority of women (78.0%) registered as organ donors **when they got their driver's license**, whereas the percentage for men was 43.8%.
- The uncertainty or inability to remember the exact occasion was more prevalent among women at 8.4% compared to 5.2% of men.
- **A significant 19.1% of men claim to have made the decision during a healthcare-related event**, in contrast to only 4.7% of women.
- **Registration via an online platform was more common among men (6.7%) than women (3.4%).**
- Visiting a **primary care provider** was the deciding moment for 13.4% of men and 3.4% of women.
- A smaller percentage, 11.9% of men and 2.2% of women, decided when they were hospitalized.

Registration location

Figure 7



While the majority of women predominantly registered for organ donation at the Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS) office, a sizable number of men also utilized organ donation websites for registration.

This is in line with the information that women are more likely to register as a donor on their first driver's license while men wait until later in life. Men display a more diverse registration pattern, often favoring digital avenues like organ donation websites.

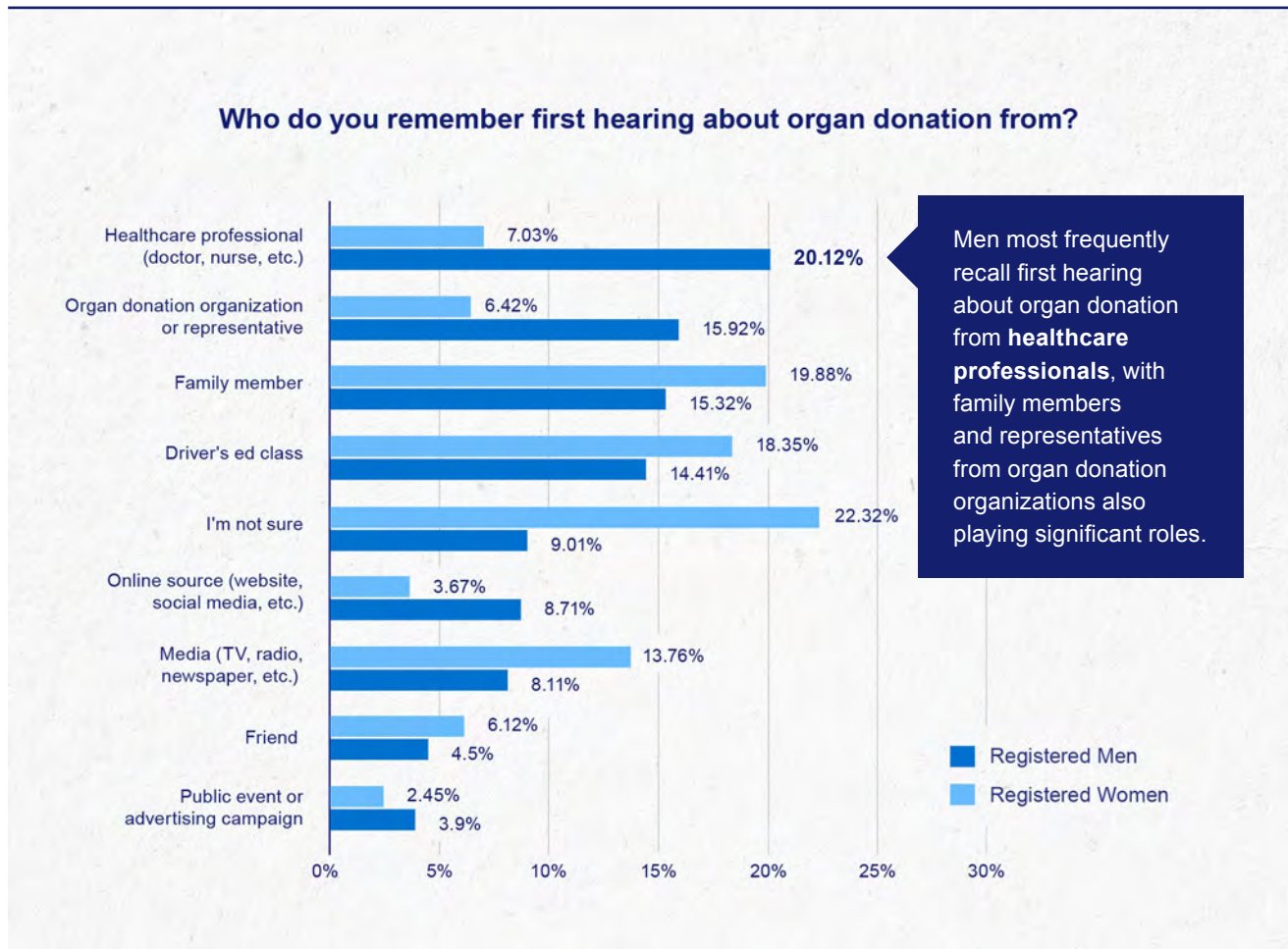
- **An overwhelming 87.05% of women registered at the DMV** compared to only 53.15% of men.
- A significant 38.44% of **men registered through organ donation websites**, in stark contrast to the mere 7.83% of women who did the same.
- Other platforms like smartphone apps, Facebook, fishing licenses and hospitals saw minimal registration from both genders.
- About 1.5% of both men and women are unsure about where they registered.

Donation influencers

In the state of Minnesota, there is a 30-minute organ donation education requirement as part of the classroom portion of driver's education. That men selected this answer as the fourth most cited option

implies a projection that they would have preferred to hear about organ donation from a healthcare professional.

Figure 8



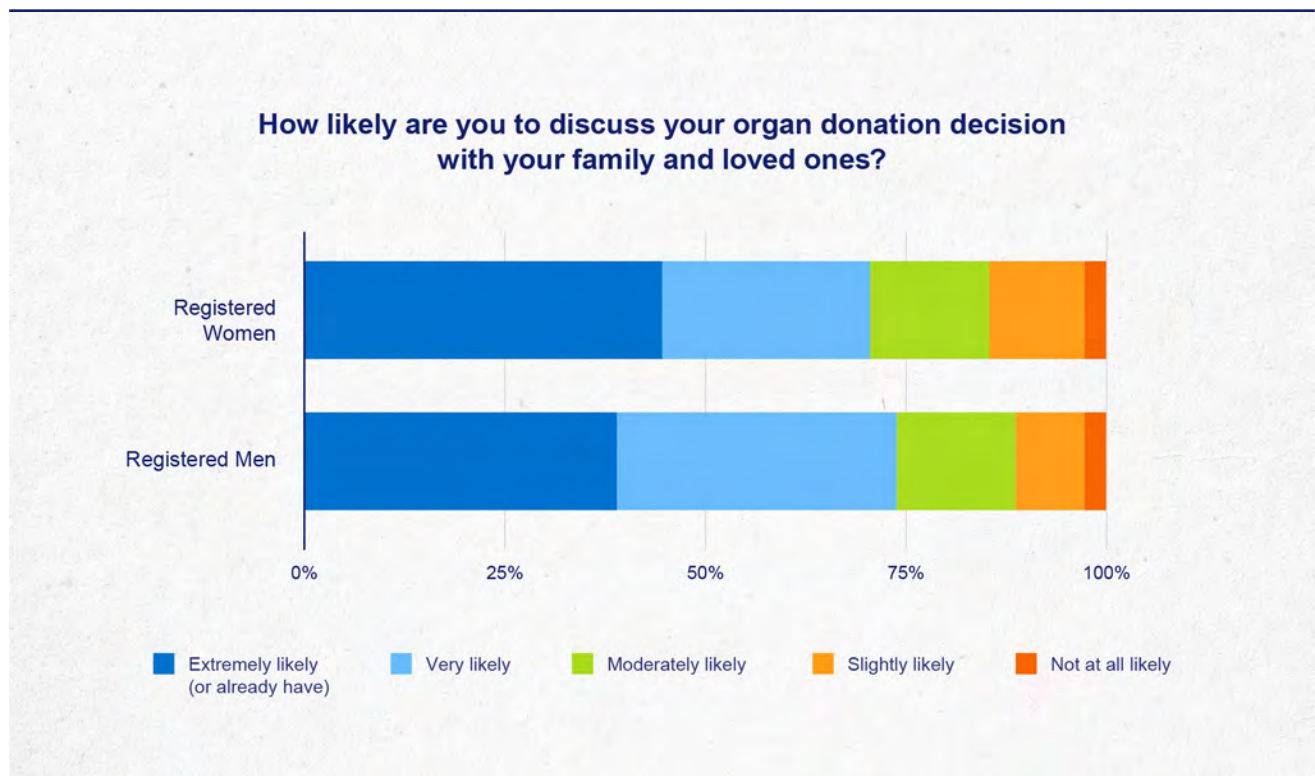
- Healthcare professionals:** The most common source, with 20.12% of men recalling first learning about organ donation from them.
- Organ donation organizations:** Ranking second, 15.92% of men remember first hearing about this topic from representatives of such organizations.
- Family members:** Closely following, 15.32% of men were introduced to the concept of organ donation by their family.
- Driver's ed class:** 14.41% of men recall their driver's education class as the first time they learned about organ donation.

Likelihood to discuss donation

Both men and women show a strong inclination towards discussing their organ donation decision with family and loved ones.

70.5% of women and 73.8% of men being likely or very likely to talk with their family about their decision. Only a small percentage - 2.7% for both genders - indicated they are not at all likely to discuss their organ donation decisions, suggesting that the topic has become more accepted and open for discussion within family and close friends.

Figure 9

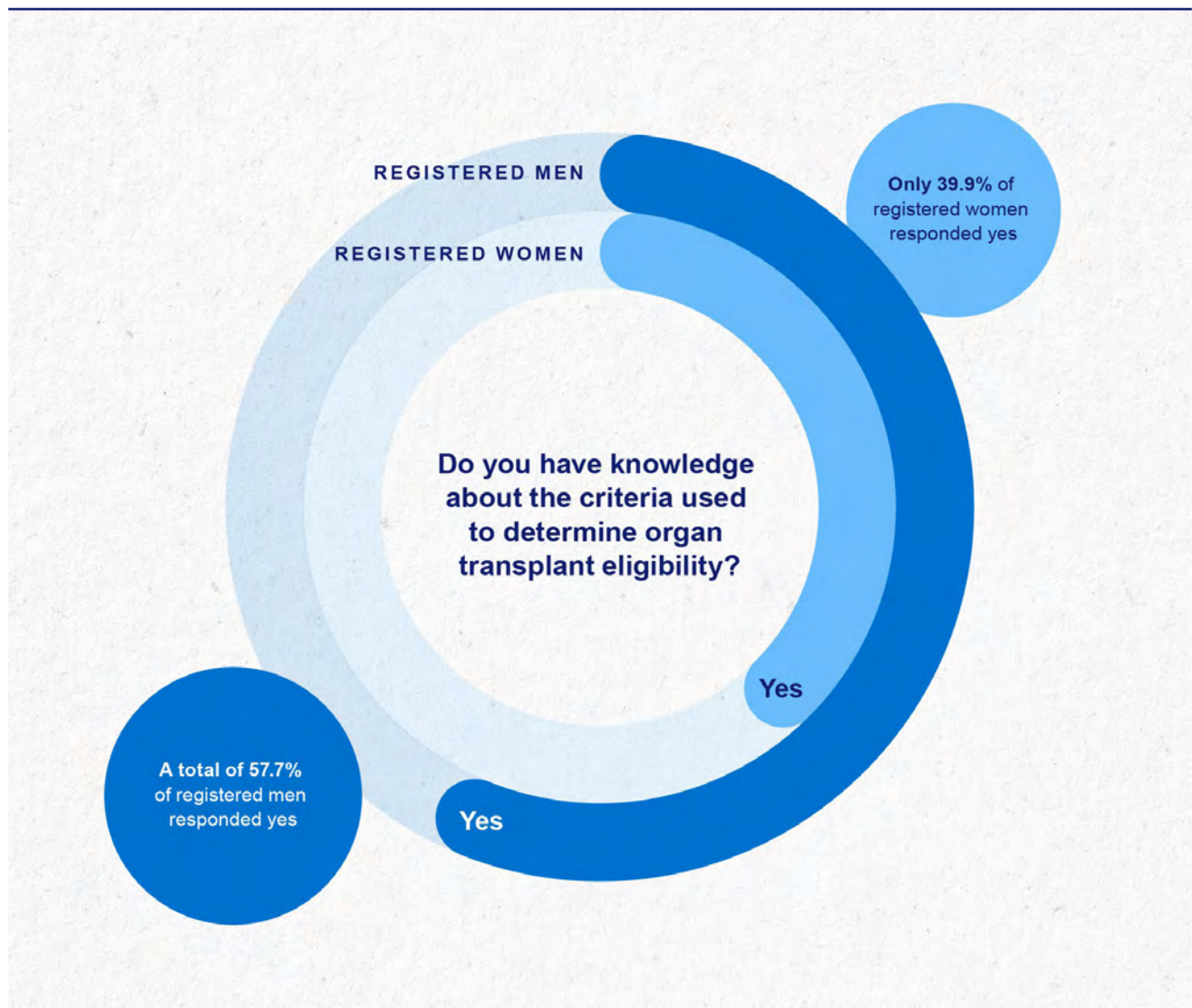


Level of understanding

Men claim to be more knowledgeable about donation criteria despite providing less salient responses to open-ended questions than the women surveyed in the study; this suggests that men might know less about the process than they claim to know.

Similarly, while a majority of women (60.1%) are unaware of the criteria used to determine organ transplant eligibility, it didn't stop them from registering as a donor. This suggests that women are more likely to register for altruistic reasons without needing all the information, while men require more information to be confident in their donation decision.

Figure 10



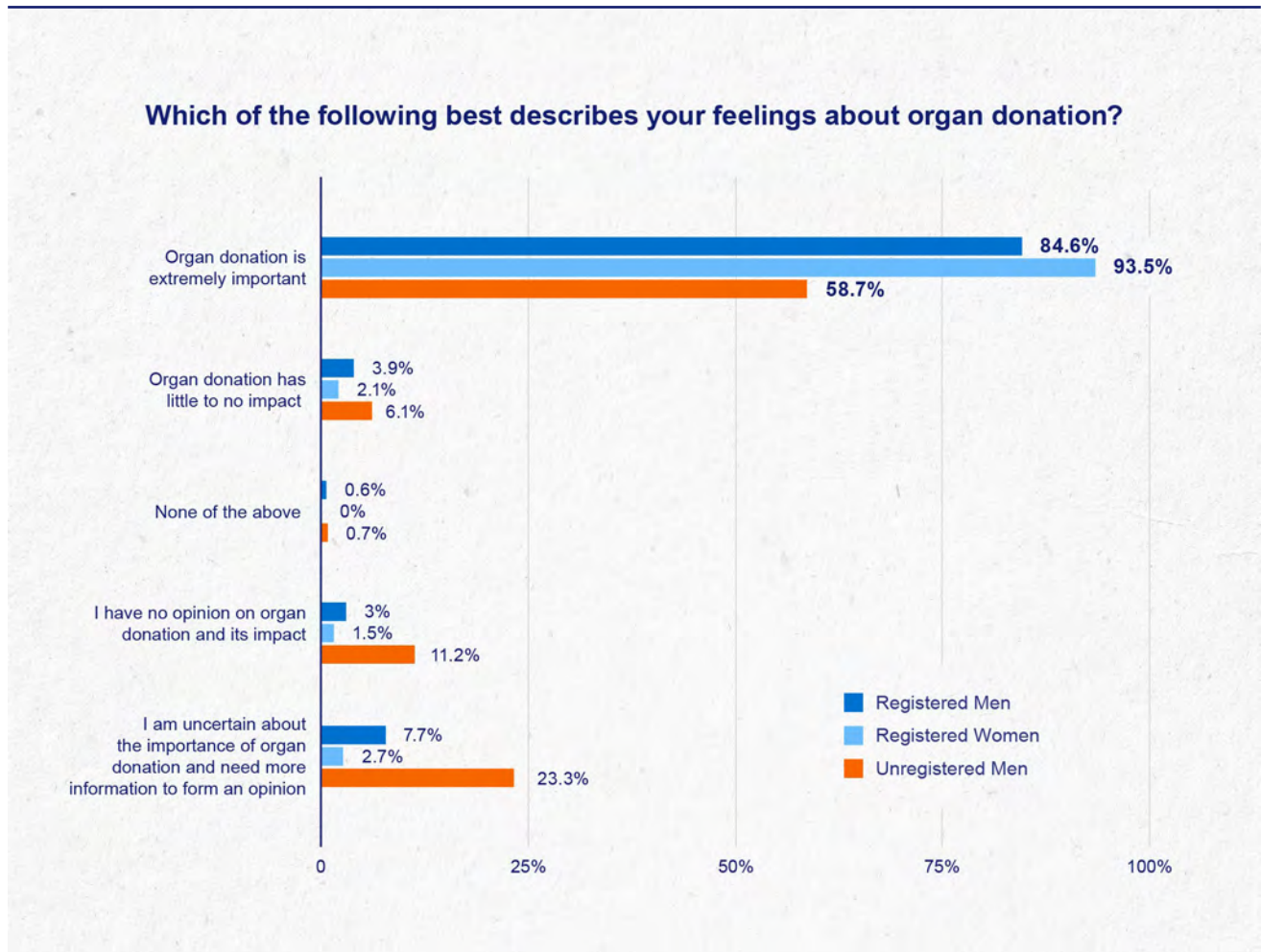
Questions for all respondents



Screening: organ donation stance

There is a high acknowledgment of the importance of organ donation among registered individuals regardless of gender, while **unregistered men show a significant portion still in need of information.**

Figure 11



Free association - organ donation

Question: “When you think of organ donation, what comes to mind first?”

Overall, the open-ended responses indicate that organ donation is viewed positively by both women and men as a charitable act that can save and extend lives. Four themes were universal:

Saving lives/helping others

The most common sentiment expressed is that organ donation is associated with saving or extending lives and helping others in need. This indicates that respondents have an overall positive perception of organ donation as an altruistic act.

“I think of the life-saving potential it holds, as well as the altruism and generosity of individuals willing to donate organs to help others in need.”

Specific organs

Many respondents associated organ donation with specific critical organs like hearts, kidneys and lungs that can be transplanted to save lives. This shows an awareness of the types of organs that are commonly donated.

“When someone’s body organs cannot work properly, they may need a new organ to replace the original function, such as the heart, liver, lungs and other important organs...”

Personal connections

Some respondents have personal experience with organ donation through someone they know being a donor or recipient. This personal connection shapes their perception of donation.

“My brother and a friend both had kidney donations to save their lives.”

Logistical associations

Respondents also associate organ donation with logistical aspects like donor registration and medical procedures, indicating awareness of the processes involved.

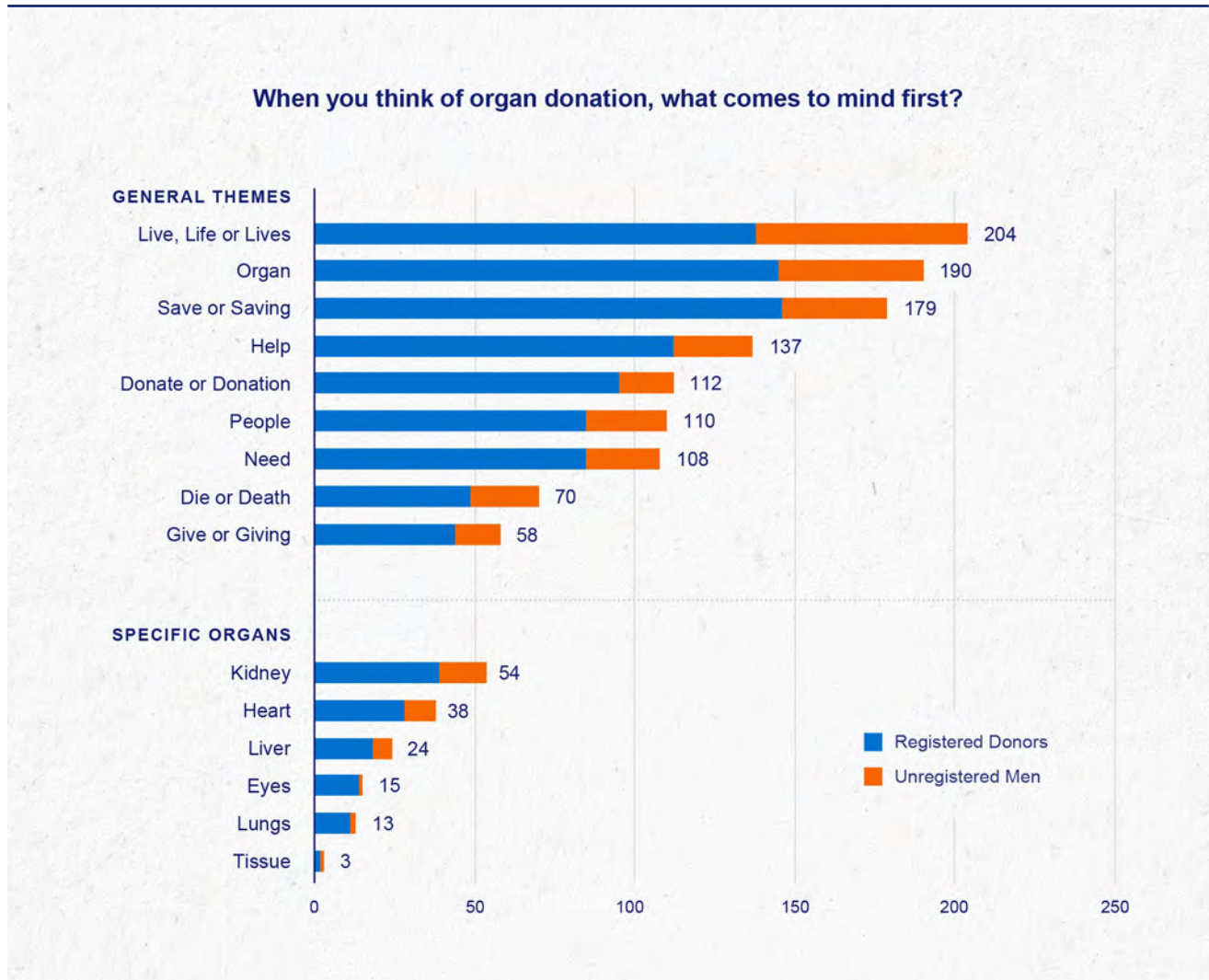
“I think of checking off the option when renewing a driver’s license.”

Top organ donation word associations

Among the written responses, some trends emerged within the most frequently used words. “Saving lives” was the most common theme, followed by “Helping

people in need.” Within the specific organs that were mentioned, kidneys were the most commonly referenced, followed closely by heart.

Figure 12



Free association - organ donation

Question: “When you think of organ donation, what comes to mind first?”

There are noticeable differences in the depth of familiarity and altruistic sentiments expressed between men and women.



Key takeaways from registered women

Women more frequently referenced personal connections to organ donation, demonstrated greater awareness of logistical details like donor registration and used more explicitly altruistic language. This suggests they have more exposure to and experience with organ donation processes and transplant cases. Their responses emphasize the life-saving benefits and nobility of the practice.



Key takeaways from registered men

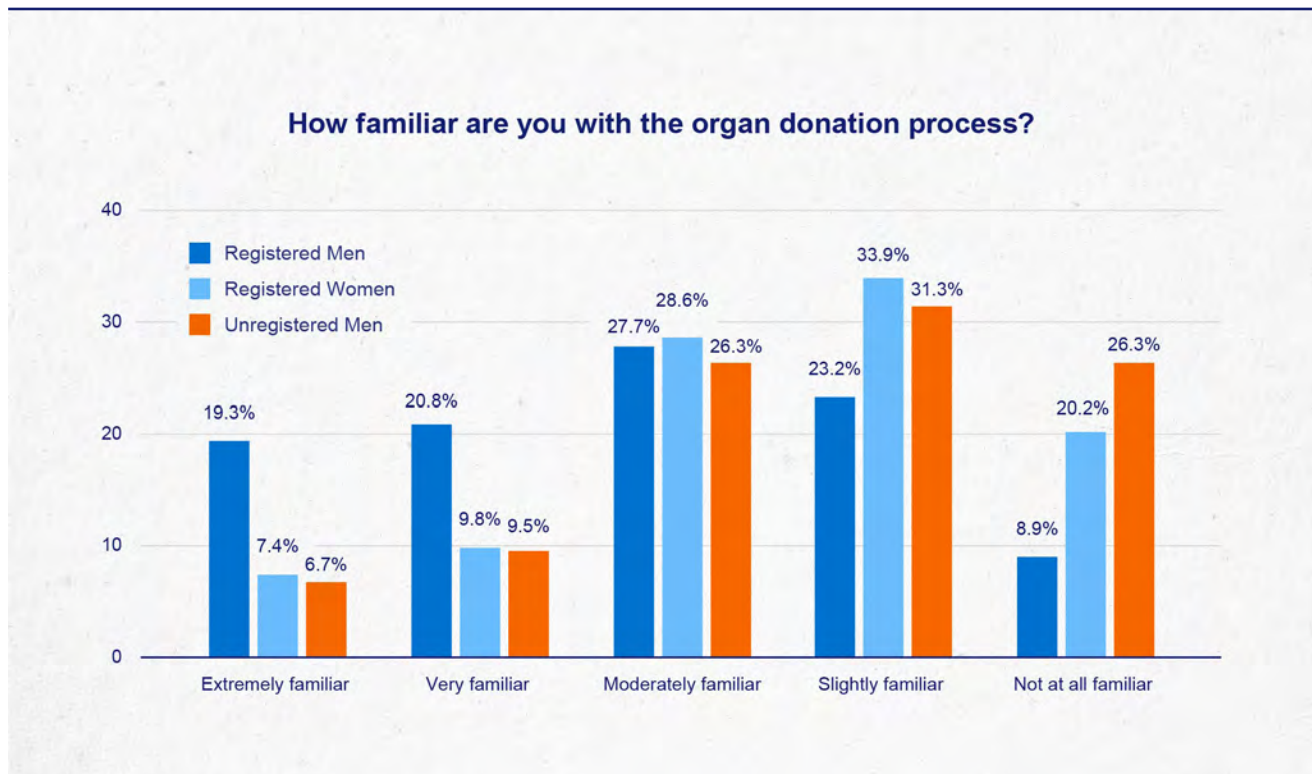
By contrast, men showed less personal familiarity in their responses and did not highlight the virtues of organ donation as strongly. Though still positive, men appear to have less knowledge of and experience with organ donation compared to women.

Donation process familiarity

Familiarity with the organ donation process varies significantly across gender and registration status, with registered men showing the highest familiarity and unregistered men the least.

The data suggests a correlation between familiarity with the organ donation process and registration status, particularly among men. Education appears to be a pivotal factor, as those who are registered are more likely to be familiar with the process.

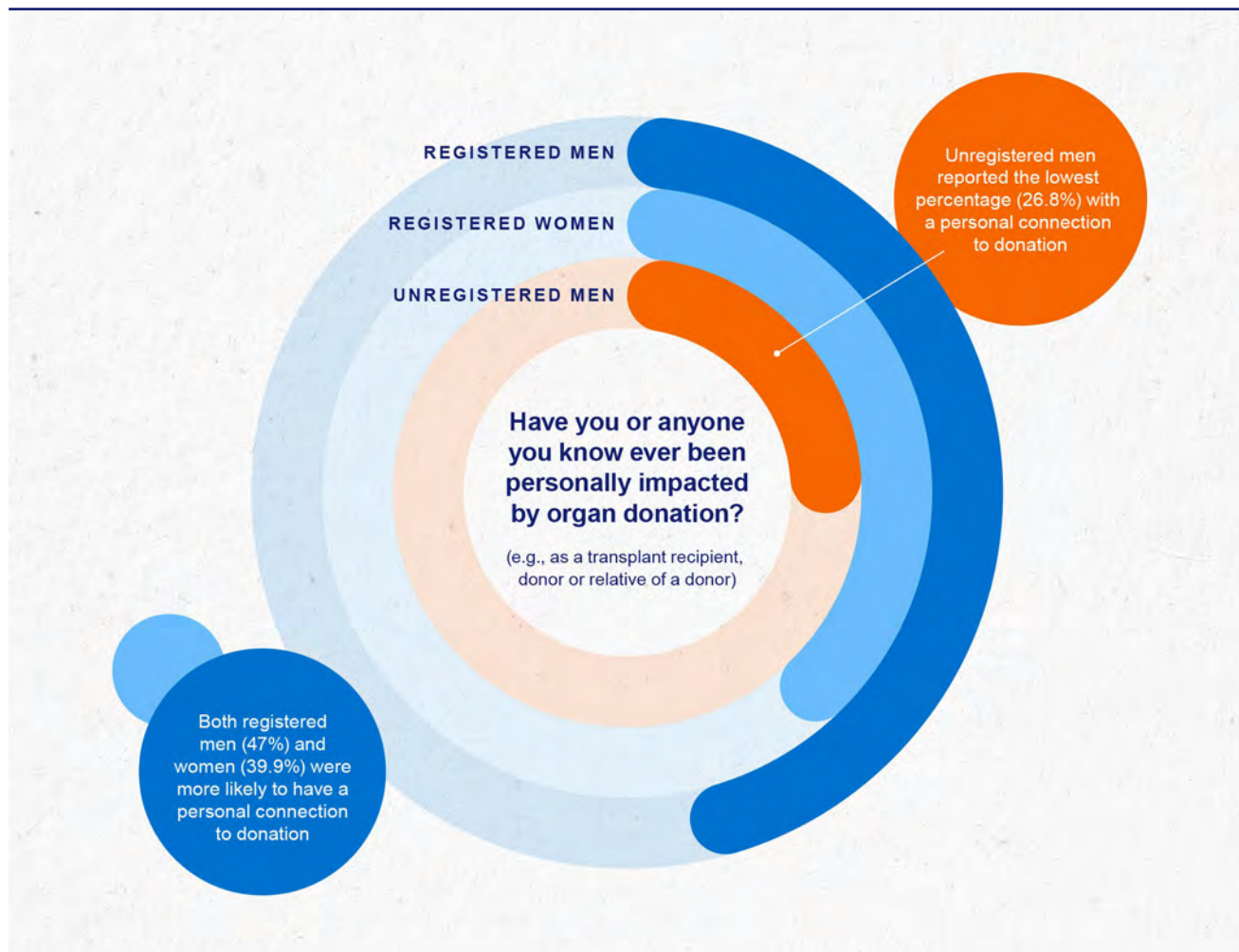
Figure 13



- **Among women, a minority report high familiarity** (7.4% extremely familiar, 9.8% very familiar), while a significant number are only slightly familiar (33.9%) or not at all familiar (20.2%).
- **Registered men demonstrate greater familiarity**, with 40.1% reporting to be extremely or very familiar with the process. Still, 23.2% are only slightly familiar, and a small 8.9% are not familiar at all.
- **Unregistered men show the lowest levels of familiarity:** only 6.7% feel extremely familiar and 9.5% very familiar. The majority are slightly familiar (31.3%) or not at all familiar (26.3%).

Personal experience

Figure 14

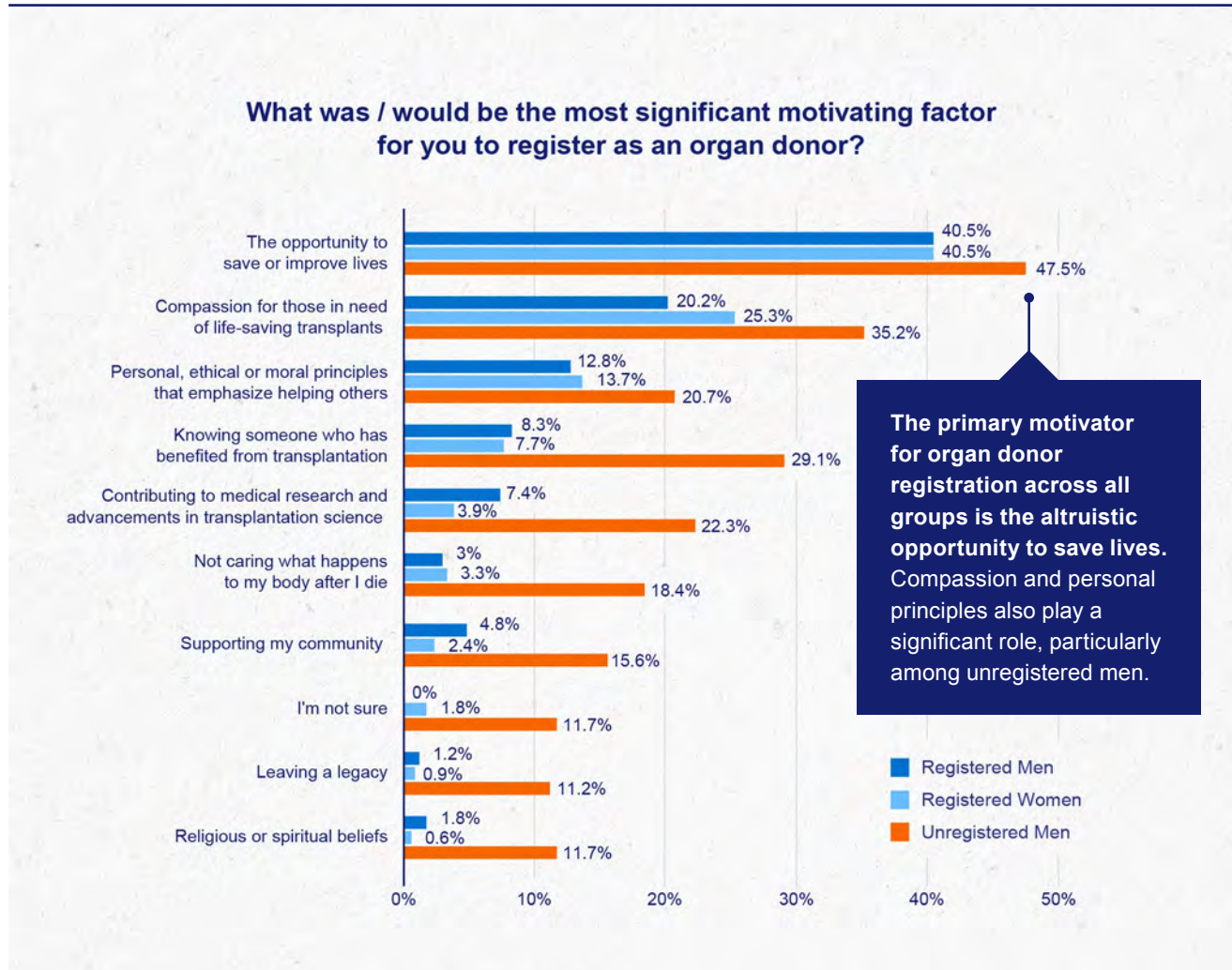


Personal experience with organ donation varies, with a majority of registered individuals stating that they or someone they know has been impacted, while most unregistered men have not had a personal connection to the issue. **The data reveals that personal experience with organ donation is a common thread among those who are registered, potentially driving their decision to become donors.** For unregistered men, highlighting real-life stories and the tangible impacts of organ donation could serve to create a personal connection to the cause, possibly motivating them to register.

- Among registered women, **60.1% report being personally impacted by organ donation**, suggesting a potential motivator for their registration.
- Registered men have a slightly lower rate of personal impact at 57.7%, yet it remains the majority, indicating **a correlation between personal experience and the decision to register.**
- **A significant majority of unregistered men, 72.6%, have not been personally impacted by organ donation**, while 26.8% have, and a small percentage prefer not to answer the question.

Motivating factors

Figure 15



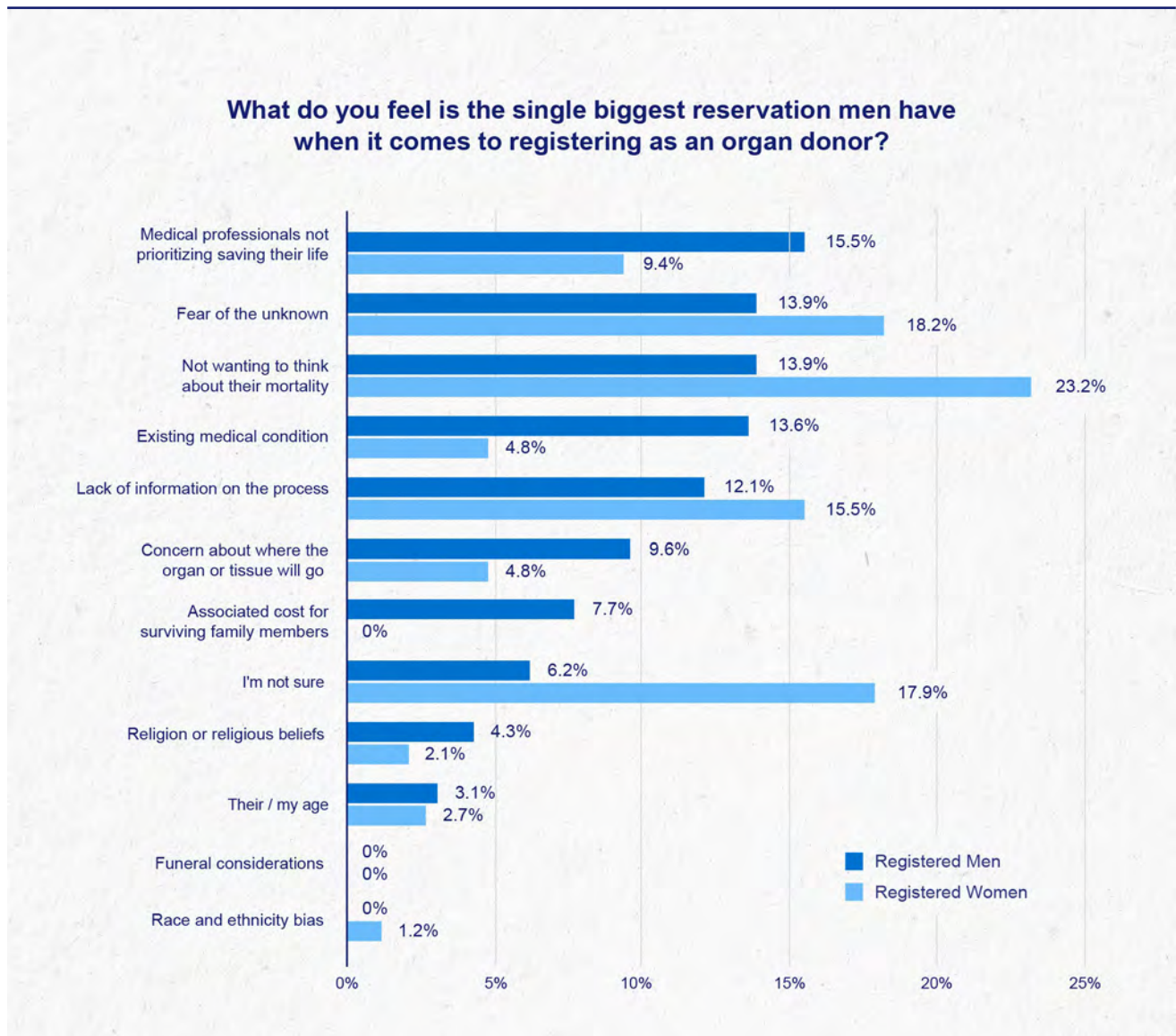
- **Both registered women and men identify the opportunity to save lives as the most significant motivator**, indicating a strong altruistic drive behind their decision.
- **Compassion for those in need of life-saving transplants is the second most common motivator**, with a slight difference between registered women and men.
- **Personal ethical or moral principles are more pronounced among unregistered men** compared to registered individuals.
- **Knowing someone who has benefited from transplantation is a notable motivator for unregistered men**, suggesting that personal connection to the issue may influence their decision to register.
- **For unregistered men, the opportunity to save lives stands out as even more important** than to registered individuals.

Registered donor perceptions about why men don't register

Registered donors believe that **mortality avoidance (or not wanting to think about one's death), fear of the unknown, and medical professionals not prioritizing saving donor's lives, are top reservations men have** when it comes to registering as an organ donor. Because this question was posed

to a group of already-registered men and women, it's important to keep in mind that these results should be read as assumptions about the behavior of unregistered men. This data should not be read as actual reasons unregistered men have chosen not to register.

Figure 16

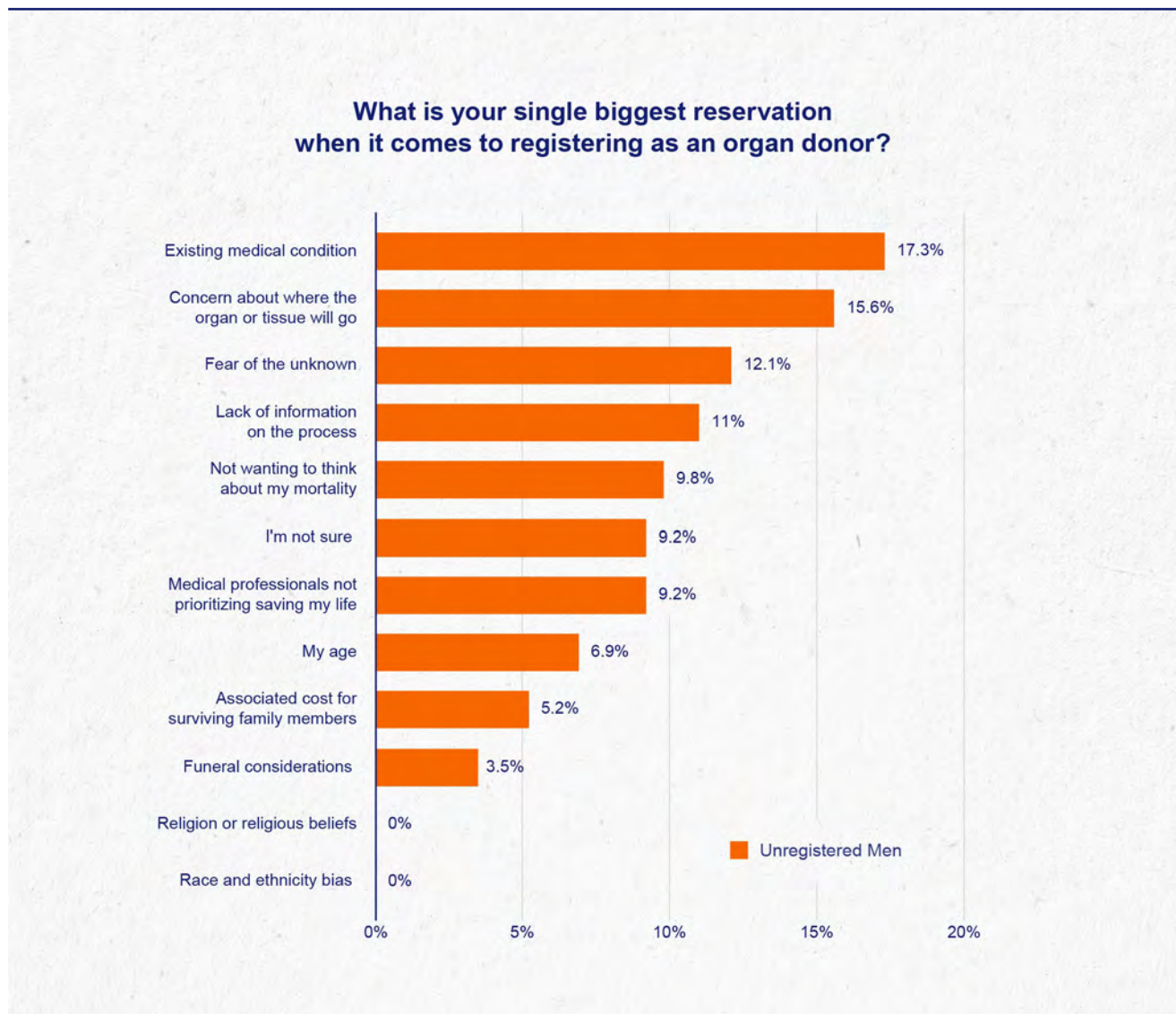


Unregistered men share their biggest reservations about registering

Unregistered men list **existing medical conditions, and concern about where the organ or tissue will go** as their top reservations regarding organ donor registration. These top concerns are not among the top two perceptions listed by registered men and women,

which further emphasizes the importance of surveying the unregistered audience specifically. **Clarifying misconceptions around medical eligibility and the organ donation process may encourage more unregistered individuals to consider registration.**

Figure 17

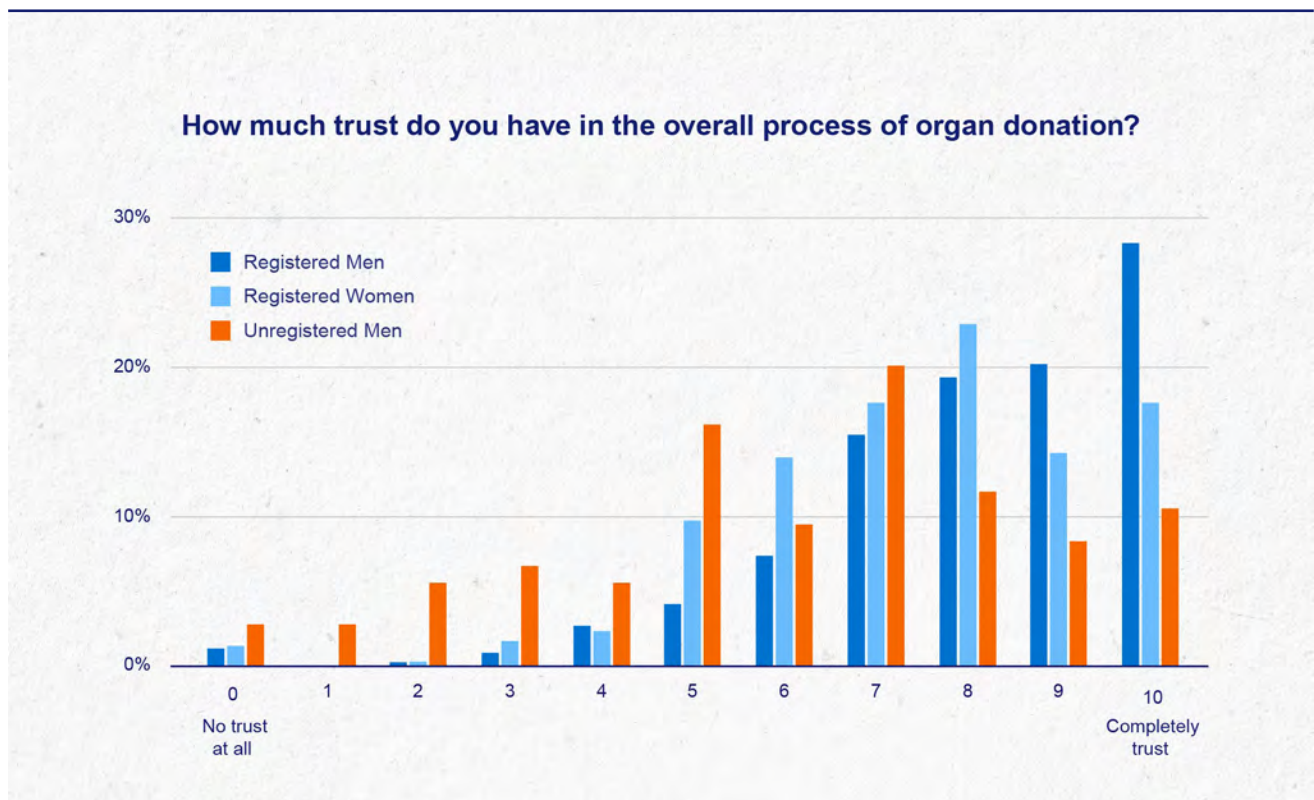


Participants’ trust in the donation process

The disparity in trust levels between registered and unregistered men indicates that increasing trust in the organ donation process could be key to encouraging registrations. Registered individuals generally have a high level of trust in

the organ donation process, with registered men showing the highest trust. Unregistered men exhibit a more varied level of trust, indicating potential areas to bolster confidence.

Figure 18



- **High levels of trust are reported by registered individuals**, with the majority rating their trust at 7 or above on a scale of 10.
- **Registered women show a peak trust rating at 8** (22.9%), while **registered men exhibit the highest trust at a rating of 10** (28.3%).
- **Unregistered men display a spread across the trust scale with notable peaks at 5 (16.2%) and 7 (20.1%)**, suggesting that while some are fairly trusting of the process, there is room for improvement.
- **The proportion of unregistered men who completely trust the process (rating of 10) is 10.6%**, less than half of that of registered men, highlighting a significant difference in trust levels between the groups.

Reactions to visuals and messaging

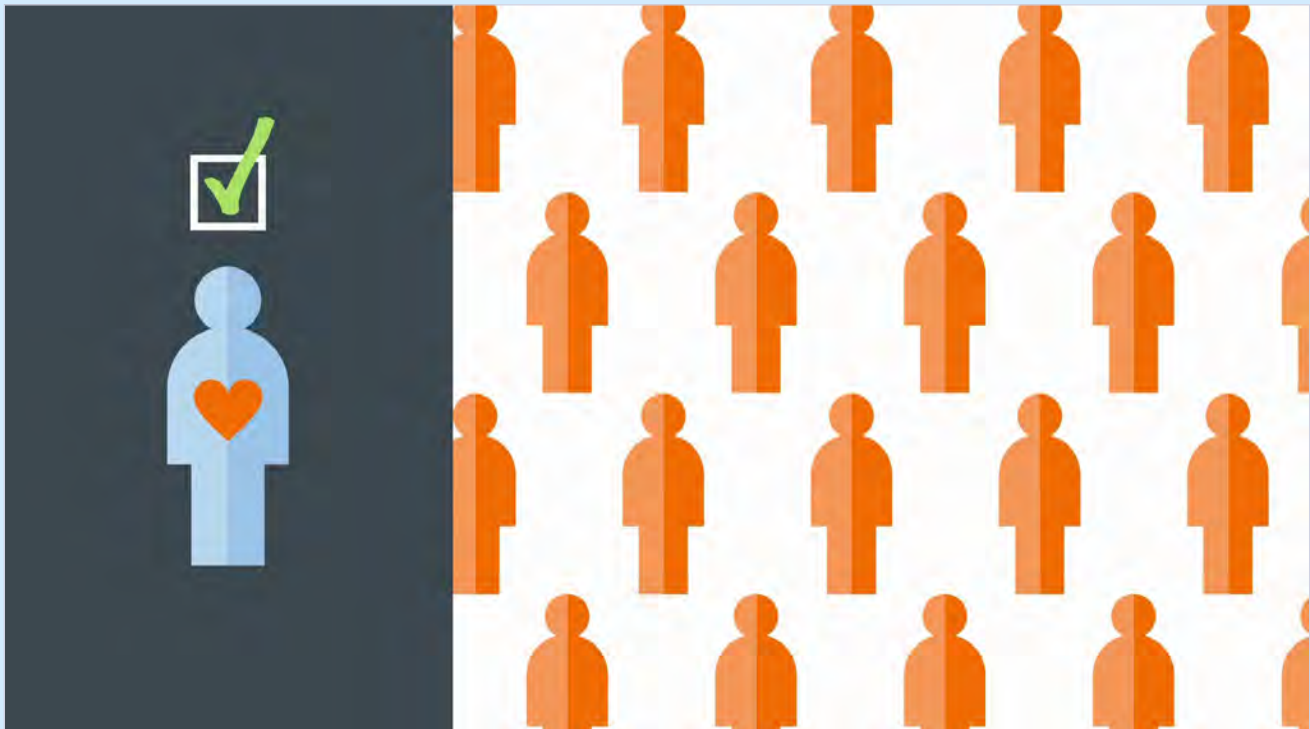


Explainer video: the donation process

After answering the first series of questions, participants were required to watch a short explainer video about the organ donation process before continuing with the survey. **The video details the need for transplants, how a person becomes eligible to donate their organs and how organs are matched with waiting recipients.**

After viewing an educational video, the biggest perceived reservations of men for both genders remains a lack of information, **suggesting the need for more comprehensive educational materials.**

ORGAN DONATION - HOW THE PROCESS WORKS



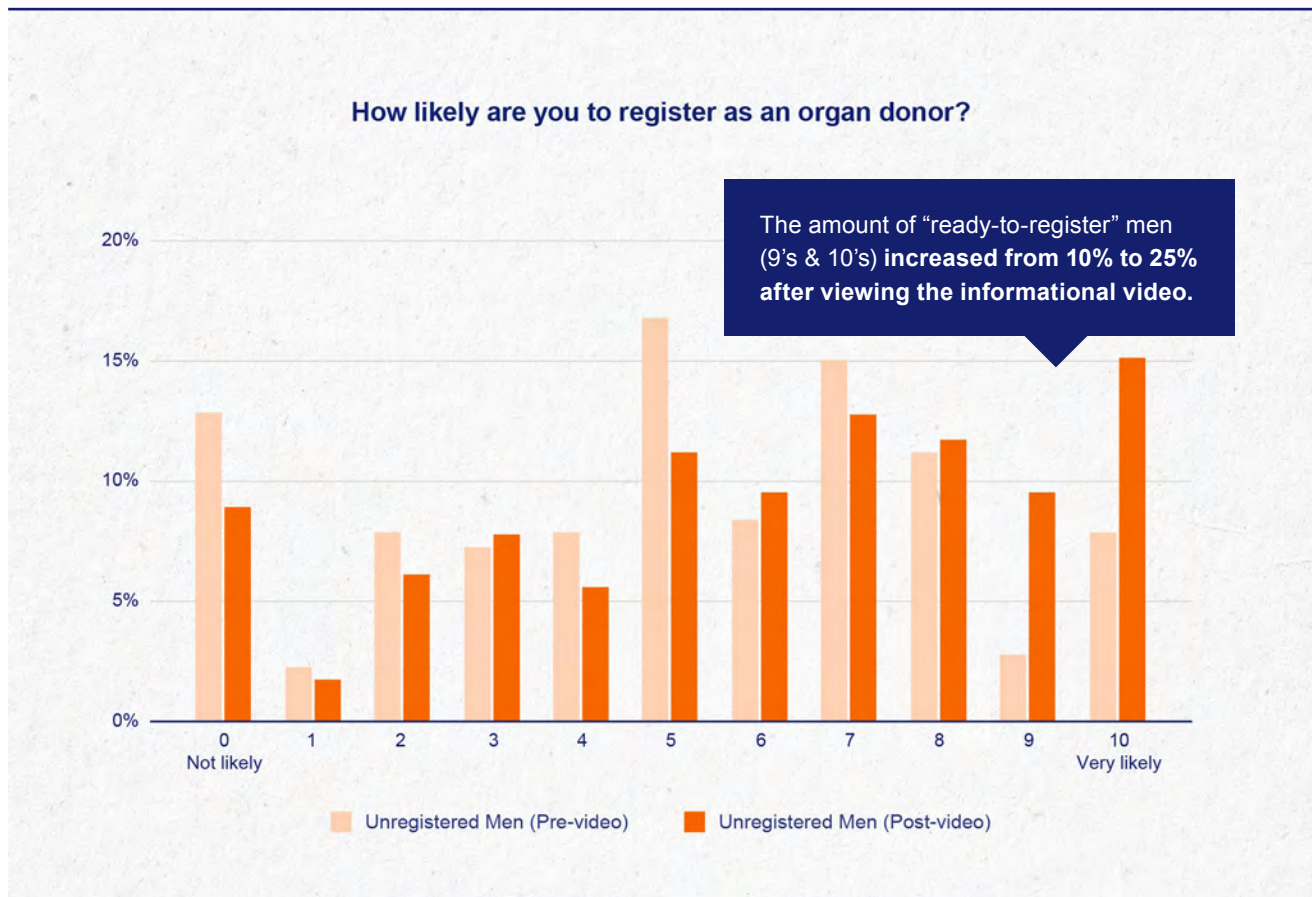
[WATCH VIDEO](#)

Registration likelihood (pre and post-video)

The Donation Process video positively influenced unregistered men's likelihood of registering as organ donors, with a notable increase in those who report being highly likely to register.

The data suggests that, while many have not had direct experiences, organ donation still touches a significant portion of both genders, underscoring its widespread impact in the community.

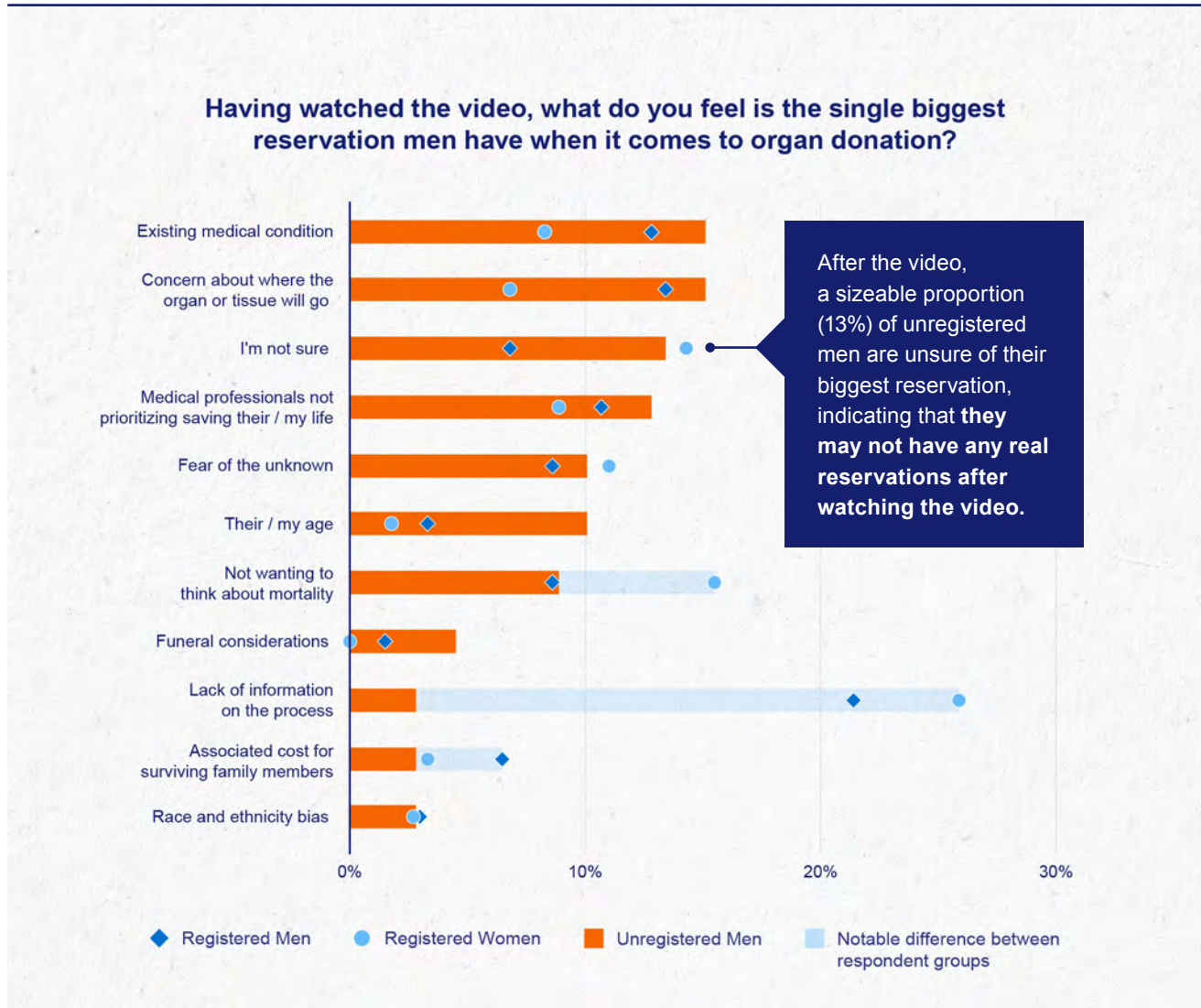
Figure 19



- **Before watching the video**, the highest concentration of unregistered men rated their likelihood to register as a donor at a moderate level (rating of 5 at 16.76%).
- **After viewing the video**, there's a shift towards a higher likelihood, with the most significant increase at the highest level of likelihood (rating of 10 at 15.1%, up from 7.82%).
- The proportions of men rating their likelihood as 9 and 7 also increased post-video, **indicating that the content had a positive persuasive impact.**
- **The percentage of men who rated their likelihood as very low (ratings of 0 to 3) decreased after watching the video**, further suggesting an overall positive shift in attitudes towards organ donation.

Biggest reservation (post-video viewing)

Figure 20

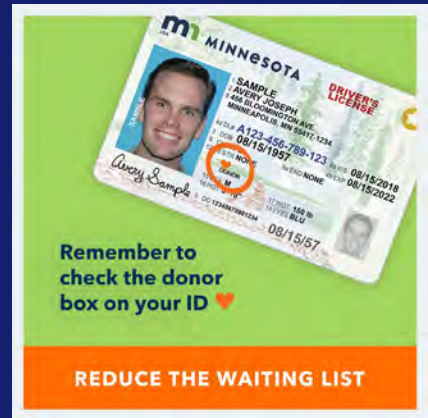


Unregistered men remain focused on medical conditions and the destination of organs. **The persistence of information gaps as the primary concern post-viewing suggests that educational content can go a long way, especially if it addresses specific concerns.**

- For registered women, the **lack of information** is what they would consider the principal reservation of unregistered men (25.9%), while mortality consideration follows (15.5%).
- For registered men, **lack of information** (21%) still stands out, but they **also cite concerns about the destination of organs** (13%).
- Unregistered men remain focused on **medical conditions** (15%) and **destination of organs** (15%).

Testing of advertising & promotional messages

Survey participants were shown a series of ad images, then asked about which of the messages was most compelling. Each of these ads was chosen because they fit into a specific creative category and use unique visuals to get the message across.



Ad 1. ID visual & messaging



Ad 2. Sports-themed messaging



Ad 3. Checkbox testimonial



Ad 4. People + waiting list fact



Ad 5. 75 lives fact messaging



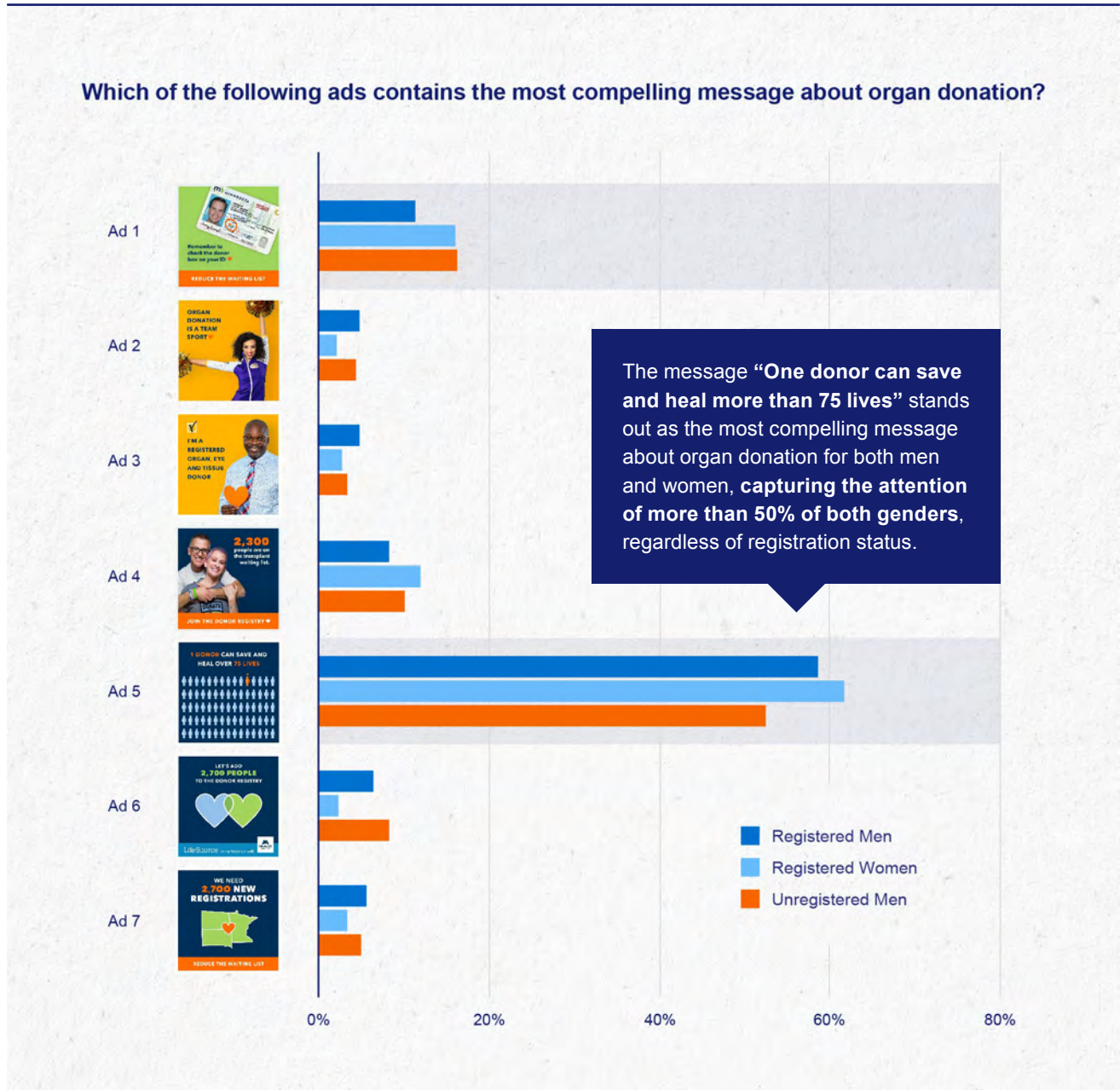
Ad 6. Fact messaging in partnership with a healthcare brand



Ad 7. Waiting list messaging with location-specific visuals

Results from advertising testing

Figure 21



Understanding the sheer impact a single donor can have is the most compelling message. Despite the apparent support for organ donation, there seems to be a gap in actual knowledge about the process,

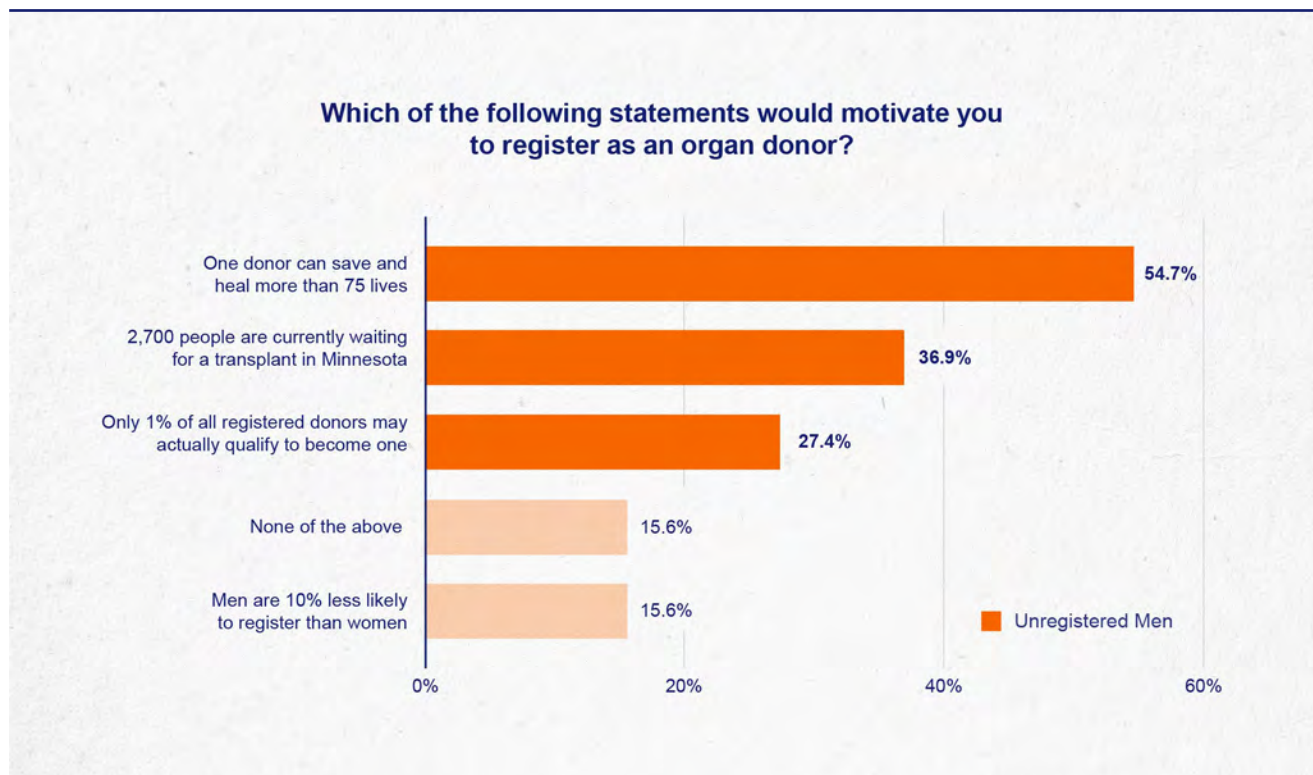
reported especially among women. There may be an opportunity to enhance awareness campaigns or education efforts tailored to each gender.

Motivating statements for unregistered men

The potential impact of a single donor is the most motivating factor for unregistered men, suggesting that emphasizing the broad reach of organ donation could be key in registration campaigns. The

data suggests that, while many have not had direct experiences, organ donation still touches a significant portion of both genders, underscoring its widespread impact in the community.

Figure 22



- A significant majority of **unregistered men (54.7%) are motivated by the statement that one donor can save and heal more than 75 lives.**
- The urgency created by the fact that 2,700 people are currently waiting for a transplant in Minnesota motivates 36.9% of respondents, indicating the **effectiveness of highlighting immediate needs.**
- The statistic that only 1% of all registered donors may actually qualify to become one motivates 27.4%, suggesting that **emphasizing the rarity and value of successful donations could be compelling.**
- A notable 15.6% of respondents did not find any of the statements motivating, which points to **the need for a variety of approaches in donor registration campaigns.**
- Equally, 15.6% of unregistered men are motivated by the gender comparison in registration rates, indicating that **competitive or comparative messaging might be influential.**

Open-ended questions: biggest reservation reasoning

“When answering the question about the single biggest reservation men have about organ donation, what motivated your answer?” *(Registered donors only)*

“Having watched the video, what is your single biggest reservation when it comes to organ donation?” *(Unregistered men)*

- **Lack of knowledge/ understanding** was the top theme for all groups. A major reservation is not understanding the organ donation process.
- **Fear of mortality** was highly mentioned in all groups as well. Confronting death makes men uncomfortable.
- **Distrust of the medical system** came up frequently in all groups. Men worry doctors won't save them if they are registered donors.
- **Control/ decision issues** were cited in all groups, but slightly more often by men. Men have trouble giving up control of their bodies.
- **Masculinity factors** were rarely mentioned in all groups, though marginally more by women. Male ego was not a major theme.

“It’s my body, I need to know what is going on. Lack of information during the process makes me fret.”

“Because I lacked information on organ donation so I assume most other men also lack information on the overall process.”

“Because most men don’t really know if they are healthy enough to be a donor.”

“I think it is hard to think about death. It is also hard to put trust in others that they will save you in the situation in which a medical donation is a possibility.”

“I’m basing it off of conversations I’ve had with my husband.”

“Men can be scared of what they don’t know. And this is not something that most people do a Google search for.”

Open-ended questions: biggest messaging opportunities

“Based on what you learned in the video, what would you tell your friends and family members about organ donation?” *(All participants)*

On the whole, the messaging themes were very consistent across all groups:

- **Communicate the need for more organ donors:** A common theme was explaining the shortage of available organs and number of people waiting for transplants, stressing that more registered donors are urgently needed.
- **Describe the process and requirements for donation:** Some respondents focused on explaining the intricacies of organ donation, including that few registered donors actually end up donating due to strict requirements. They cited details like needing to be brain dead in a hospital to donate.
- **Articulate the impact of donation:** People frequently mentioned telling friends and family about the ability of a single donor to save multiple lives through organ donation. They described the profound impact donation can have for recipients.

“That it helps save lives, I mean, if you’re already dead, what would it matter? It’s not like they’re going to do it when you’re alive.”

“How few people actually qualify to donate, what the requirements are for donation, and how many people are passing away waiting for a donation.”

“That the need far outweighs the supply. That it’s a bit more complicated than you’d think but it’s incredibly helpful and important.”

“I would tell my friends & family that there are 2,700 people on the waiting list and I would ask them to consider becoming an organ donor if they’re not already.”

“How many lives could be impacted from one person donating.”

“Organ donation should not be feared.”

“Helping others is a very happy thing.”

Specific messaging suggestions from unregistered men

- **Emphasize life-saving impact:** Many unregistered men said they would emphasize to loved ones how organ donation can save lives and give others a second chance. They seem to feel the life-giving capacity of donation is a compelling message.
- **Encourage registering as donors:** A number of responses indicated men would encourage friends and family to register as organ donors after seeing the video's portrayal of the donation process and recipients' stories. Some said they would urge loved ones to consider donation.
- **Explain the donation process:** Some respondents focused on explaining the organ donation process, either logistically or emotionally. They would inform loved ones about details like organ matching, timing of procedures after death, and what the experience is like for donor families.
- **Highlight ease of registering:** Some respondents focused on the ease and accessibility of registering as an organ donor through state departments of motor vehicles. They would inform loved ones it's simple to sign up.

"How many lives could be impacted from one person donating."

"Testimonies from organ recipients and the impact on their lives."

"Make them seem cool to other guys then they'll wanna sign up a lot more. Idk give them stickers or something."

"Videos informing people like the one I just watched, information being posted on social media, statistics on registering as an organ donor and how impactful it can be."

"Maybe advertise to men?"

"Making that video go viral would help."

"Information regarding the process and under what circumstances organs can be used."

"I think that maybe there should be a different approach, maybe assure people that they will still receive the best care possible even though they are organ donors."



Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights that reflect the nuances and various levels of understanding around the organ donation process, the role of donor registration and the impact of various messages - particularly among unregistered men. It underscores the importance of **ongoing targeted educational campaigns, tailored messaging and strategic outreach efforts** to propel the success of future organ donor registration and public awareness initiatives.

Overall, people have complex and diverse attitudes towards organ donation registration, which should be considered carefully for communication purposes. **Identifying target audiences and developing personas** as part of outreach and awareness campaigns **will help ensure that intended audiences are reached** with messages that will be most likely to prompt action.

Men, in particular, tend to associate organ donor registration with **healthcare-related experiences**. This presents an opportunity to further target them in environments where they are already disposed to make the connection to organ donation, such as in clinics or pharmacies. This dovetails with unregistered men citing health concerns as a barrier to registration. Utilizing these opportunities to also **address health-related misconceptions** and providing a simple, secure way to **register as a donor online** may increase the number of men who are registered donors.

Finally, there is a **small but important portion of unregistered men who have considered registering and rated their likelihood to register in the future as very high**. The data also show that a much higher portion of **unregistered men may be likely to register with a little bit of information that demystifies the donation process and addresses their concerns about existing health conditions**. Reaching unregistered men with this information, coupled with the highly motivational message that **one person can save and heal more than 75 lives**, could be a winning combination to increase registration in this key demographic.

LifeSource *in collaboration with* **Give**

For more information about this report and how the organ donation process works, please visit: life-source.org