

Moment of Honour

Background

The Organ Donation and Transplantation (ODT) Directorate of NHS blood and Transplant consists of 12 regional Organ Donation Services Teams (ODST's). Although the clinical organ donation process remains the same, some teams have local variances when it comes to some non-clinical practices.

The Moment of Honour is one such local variable.

The moment of honour was being done informally in one or two local hospitals. This was then picked up formally by a specialist registrar and SNOD in South Wales who wanted to honour the incredible gift of life and the selfless act of donation by the donor family in a more consistent way.

The Moment of Honour is a time that is taken during the organ donation process to acknowledge and honour the gift that the donor and their family are giving to others.

Although the Moment of Honour has been undertaken for some time in some regional ODST's by Specialist Nurses, there has so far in the UK, been no consistency in this practice. Some ODST's perform this Moment of Honour with every organ donor, some on an ad hoc basis dependent on the individual practice of the Specialist Nurse involved whilst some teams do not incorporate this into standard practice.

Aim

It is the aim of ODT to work alongside the National Advisory Groups within the UK to write a standard of practice with minimum recommendations as to how the Moment of Honour will be undertaken across the UK. This will be irrelevant of geography, which team is facilitating the organ donor and individual beliefs around the Moment of Honour.

Method

A short survey using 'forms' was sent out to the Organ Donation Team Managers and asked the following questions of their team members:

- 1) Do you use the moment of honour? If yes, let us know more
- 2) If you do use the moment of honour, what do you do? Words, silences, etc?
- 3) If you don't use it, are there any restrictions to you using it?
- 4) At what point do you facilitate the moment of honour in the DCD process?
- 5) At what point do you facilitate the moment of honour in the DBD process?
- 6) Have you had any feedback from staff involves regarding the moment of honour?
- 7) Have you had any challenges in implementing the moment of honour? If yes, please let us know

Findings

The results of the survey highlighted and supported what was already known of the inconsistent practices of the ODST's across the UK. Those teams who do the Moment of Honour as routine found this positive for all involved. Those teams who do this on an ad hoc basis or do not do this at all were interested to find out more and to have a standardised practice across the UK. One such response highlighted that "many SNOD's are aware of the moment of honour and are interested to learn more but none have used it." There were no restrictions identified to doing the moment of honour

and for those who currently do not practice this, they would not anticipate any issues but it is “just a case of needing to embed it as a standard process.”

The feedback that was given about how local staff/NORS teams feel about the moment of honour was also overwhelmingly positive. For example:

“SNOD’s feel it reassures hospital staff how much the donor is at the centre of the process.”

“Staff are always very receptive and proud to be involved.”

“Positive feedback from the NORS”

There was minimal but important feedback from the survey which highlighted the moment of honour too emotional for the Specialist Nurses involved. It is only right to acknowledge and accept that this is how some people in the future may feel. However, it is also important to highlight that the Moment of Honour is about the donor and their family.

Feedback in regard to respecting the moment of honour in the DCD donor

The only challenge identified was when to introduce the Moment of Honour in the DCD process. The timing of implementation for a DCD was not as clear with differing practices. For example:

Following the surgical handover so all staff who are involved are present;

Before WoLST after the WHO checklist even if the patient is a PTA;

Before WoLST in the anaesthetic room;

After skin closure before the NORS team leave;

After last offices in theatre.

Feedback in regard to respecting the moment of honour in the DBD process

The timings for undertaking the moment of honour in the DBD process appeared to be easier due to the controlled nature of a DBD theatre. The most common timing of the Moment of Honour for DBD’s was following the WHO checklist in theatre prior to knife to skin. However, a few of the Specialist Nurses recommended doing it in ICU prior to transfer to theatre.

Minimum Recommendations:

- Moment of Honour to be introduced as normal practice within all 12 ODST’s by Spring 2020
- The SR/SNOD will be responsible for informing the donor family at the time of consent that this is what happens. *This will allow time for any specific family requests to be discussed*
- The SNOD will lead the Moment of Honour unless anyone else is identified/requests involvement
- A few words to be read/spoken to honour the donor and their family followed by a ‘moment’ of silence – length of time determined by the SNOD average is less than a minute
- For DBD: The Moment of Honour will be undertaken in theatre following the WHO checklist with NORS Team and local theatre team present
- For DCD: The Moment of Honour will be pre WoLST after WHO checklist – will encompass all staff involved and shows respect even if patient is PTA