

# Facebook's organ donor option deemed successful for now, study finds

By ACSH Staff — June 20, 2013

 or type unknown

[1] Seems there is another reason to like Facebook: A recent [study](#) [2] shows last year's initiative to add organ donation as an option on the popular social media site proved quite successful at least in the short term.

The Facebook donor site was linked to an official database of organ donors. More than 13,000 Facebook users registered as organ donors the very same day Facebook added the feature May 1, 2012. The spike in numbers represents an over-20-fold increase as compared to the baseline average of a little more than 600 registrations per day, according to researchers at John Hopkins University School of Medicine. Registrations totaled 39,818 over the 13-day study period, 32,958 more than would have been expected from other campaigns.

Prior to the launch of the organ donation campaign on social media, organ donation awareness and registration was done through schools, work events and, the most popular, at the DMV, amounting to about 100 million people in the United States signing up. Facebook teamed up with John Hopkins and a few others to launch its organ donor option on the timeline platform.

Though the study has its limitations one being the unknown durability of the Facebook effect the researchers say it's evident that "novel applications of social media may prove effective in increasing organ donation rates and likewise might be utilized in other refractory public health problems in which communication and education are essential."

ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross was pleased to see this report, but had concerns: My main concern is the duration, or durability, of this beneficial outreach program. We certainly need more Americans willing to donate organs. In other nations, the opt-out system keeps the supply up; here, we mainly require potential donors to opt-in, meaning they have to sign some form to allow organ harvest after death.

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## Links

[1] <http://hsdispatch.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/149423008.jpg>

[2] [http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-204\\_162-57589833/study-allowing-organ-donation-status-on-facebook-increased-number-of-donors/](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-204_162-57589833/study-allowing-organ-donation-status-on-facebook-increased-number-of-donors/)