

This paper mostly discusses barriers and motivators to donating blood and the things that could be done in order to promote donations. The major barriers to donating blood were perceived infection rates, fear of needles, seeing blood and the supposed unpleasant feelings or changes after donation (such as vasovagal responses). On the other hand, the main motivators that contribute to blood donations were altruism, collectivism, social pressure, convenience, organizational reputation and trust, perceived need for donors, free infectious disease screening and the potential financial rewards.

The level of information that people have about blood donations in general are also a contributor to whether or not donations will happen. It was found that general advertising has only a limited role to play in stimulating donations and instead, word-of-mouth, plays a much larger role. It offers an alternative form of attracting and persuading potential and existing blood donors, especially with the advent of the internet allowing users to promote and share their experiences with others.

The questions that this article sought to answer were: (1) the awareness of the blood service; (2) the willingness to donate blood; (3) to what extent were donors willing to recommend the blood service to other potential donors; (4) what were the factors influencing the willingness to recommend and (5) what communication channels were used.

As mentioned previously, word-of-mouth as an alternative advertising method was thought to be more effective than general advertising. Word of mouth communication that employed selective exposure strategies and words that sought to change attitudes were found to be quite effective. With word of mouth, a level of satisfaction by the user is implied and it is assumed that one is recommending it as they found it to be a good alternative or decision (so in this case, donating blood).

It was found that there was a positive influence of word-of-mouth on individuals' willingness to donate blood; results showed that for people between the ages of 18 and 30 that recommendations were the deciding factor for blood donations at the Red Cross. This level of influence decreased with increasing age. The same could be seen in the role of recommendations being the deciding factor of whether or not someone is more likely to donate in the future. The older population preferred objective information from the organizations to be more valuable in their decision making process than word-of-mouth. What is interesting is that even though the importance of recommendations on whether or not people donated decreased with age, the likelihood of recommending donations increased with age.

This article is relevant to my NURS360 community experience as I noticed that there were a lot of open donation time slots. Although there were a decent number of donors throughout my shift, I couldn't help but think about what could increase the number of donors. The majority of the donors were of the middle-aged to older population, and using word-of-mouth recommendations as a primary strategy to increase donations may not work in that population. However, in the future we do have to take into account what the current younger population is. Earlier this year, there was a collaboration between the Red Cross and Snoopy (the dog) and donors were given Snoopy T-shirts with donations. This blew up on social media, specifically TikTok, and there was a significant increase in the number of donations given throughout the United States. Given the current younger population and the primary factor influencing decision being marketing and peer-to-peer recommendations (even if they don't know the person giving the recommendation), in the future, this word-of-mouth recommendations may significantly increase the number of donations made to the Red Cross.

Trying to increase the amount of blood donations is important as there is and has been a shortage of blood supply nationally. It can be used in a variety of situations, not necessarily life threatening, and I don't think that people understand the significance of donating blood. Going off the social media space, I believe that, as nurses, we currently don't have a lot of commanding power in influencing decisions of the general population. However, current nursing students and new graduates are still within a similar age group where people can form parasocial relationships (a relationship that a media user engages in with a media persona) with and thus can contribute to the decision making process and greater social perception towards blood donations in general.

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