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Today's letters: Israel has the right idea about organ donations



PAUL RUSSELL | Published: 09/10/13
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Yusra Gadban stands over her daughter Samah Gadban, 12, a Israeli Druze Arab, as she recovers from a heart transplant operation at the Schneider hospital in Petah Tikva, Israel.

MENAHEM KAHANA / AFP / Getty Images

Israel has the right idea about organ donations

Re: [Make Your Organ-Donation Wishes Known](#), editorial, Oct. 1; stories and letters on assisted suicide.

Presumably, we all want an organ in our time of need, but only a subset of the population is committed to donating one. This persistent disparity calls for redress.

Dogged by one of the worst rates of donation in the Western world, Israel established a policy to incentivize donor registration based on the principle of reciprocity. Legislation was passed in 2008 that grants organ allocation priority to people who have previously signed a donor card or who have consented to organ donation from a deceased family member. Not surprisingly, this measure has been found to increase the rate of donation. But it's a concept that other jurisdictions have yet to embrace.

So as long as we are hung up on the idea that the only morally acceptable path to sustainable equilibrium is a failing altruistic one, then perhaps would-be donors can be galvanized by drawing on the right-to-die movement's slogan.

'Dying with dignity' is a euphemism for assisted suicide. 'Dying without dignity' is the end of a life lived not having signed an organ donor card.

Simon Dermer, Toronto.