



## How public trust and healthcare quality relate to blood donations

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Is public trust in the healthcare system and healthcare quality related to blood donation behaviour? In this paper, the authors explore the extent of this relation across 28 European countries using survey data. Results show that while public *trust* in the healthcare system predicts individual propensity to donate blood, the *performance* of the system does not.

Hence, alongside individual-level socio-demographic variables associated with blood donation behaviour, namely age, gender, employment status and matrimonial status, the study establishes a correlation between the *perception* of the healthcare system and blood donations.

[#BloodDonations](#) [#Trust](#) [#Perceptions](#) [#Healthcare](#)

### Background

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### Context



- As other types of donations, blood donations have been shown to be correlated with socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, employment status and matrimonial status.
- **Blood donations take place in specific medical environments as the blood system is part of the larger healthcare system in many countries.** Therefore, the organizational and medical context of blood donation may vary across healthcare systems and be related to an individual's behaviour.
- **No direct link has been established between the performance of the healthcare system of a country and blood donations.** Yet, indirect evidence exists as in countries with higher life expectancy people tend to perceive the procedure of blood donation safer.
- **Collecting blood donations varies across countries both in the organization but also in the cultural setting in which it takes place.** The beliefs, values and social norms have been shown to play a role in individuals' social decisions, and could have an effect on blood donations.
- Donors have been shown to be more **motivated to give blood when their individual level of trust is higher, but there has been no study on the link between blood donation and broader levels of trust in a country, which are shaped by how healthcare systems are portrayed in the media and how experiences are debated in the public discourse.** Hence, public trust in the healthcare system could play a key role in motivating people's blood donations.

# ERNOP Research Note

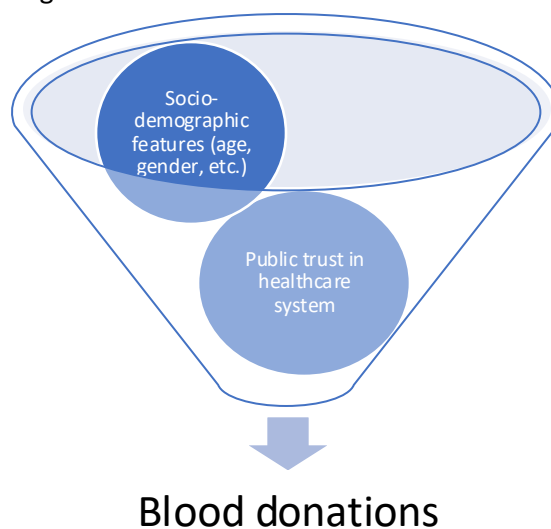
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### Take aways & Learnings



- To explore the relation between public trust in the healthcare system and the quality of the system to blood donations, the authors use data from the 2014 wave of the Eurobarometer, a repeated survey among representative samples from European Union member states (28 countries in 2014).
- **Public trust** in the healthcare system was measured with the European Values Survey, in which respondents were asked about their confidence in the healthcare system. On the other hand, the **performance of the healthcare system** was measured with two indexes: one which captures how well a country manages to prevent amenable deaths and the other which captures the healthcare expenditures relative to a country's gross domestic product (GDP).
- The research suggests a **strong relation between the trust in the healthcare system and the propensity for individuals to donate blood**. However, **the objective quality of the healthcare system is not linked with blood donation behaviour**.
- As underlined by the authors, the **measure of public trust used here captures different concepts such as trust in the healthcare system as a whole, trust in health institutions, and in professionals**. Moreover, it does not give insight on how blood banks, which can be independent, are specifically perceived.
- For **future research**, it would be interesting to explore **how declining trust in Western democracies affects blood donation** and broader patterns of charitable giving.

Figure 1: Factors linked with blood donations



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