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## Health

### Dutch see spike in organ donors after hoax reality series

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**The Netherlands has seen the number of registered organ donors skyrocket following a hoax reality show in which the top prize was purportedly a kidney from a dying woman.**

More than 12,000 people have signed up as organ donors since the airing of Dutch broadcaster [BNN's Big Donor Show](#), the country's [Health Ministry](#) said in a statement on Monday.

"Normally the register receives 3,000 to 4,000 donor forms per month."

Earlier this year, the producers of [Big Donor Show](#) drew almost universal derision and condemnation for the program, in which kidney patients appeared to be pitted against each other in an attempt to "win" a kidney from a woman diagnosed with inoperable brain cancer.

Each contestant made a moving case as to why he or she would most benefit from the organ donation. One by one, participants were eliminated for a variety of reasons, including their age, job status and even for bad habits, like smoking.

"Some people will think it's tasteless, but we think the reality is even more shocking and tasteless: waiting for an organ is just like playing the lottery," Laurens Drillich, chair of the [BNN](#) network, said at the time.

Controversial show made news worldwide

Having grabbed headlines around the globe, producers eventually revealed during the finale that the program had been a hoax designed to raise awareness about the country's shortage of donors, and the lives and problems facing those waiting for organ donations.

Though the three finalists had been in on the hoax, each was indeed waiting for an organ donation in real life. The donor was played by an actress.

The show was timed to coincide with the fifth anniversary of the death of Bart de Graaff, the [Dutch TV](#) network's founder, who died after waiting seven years for an organ donation.

Before the show's revealing finale, producers were condemned by everyone from [Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende to the Royal Netherlands Medical Association](#).

However, afterwards, some praised the creators for their awareness-raising stunt.

With files from the Associated Press

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