Half of American Indian (AI) adults are diagnosed with diabetes and are 3.5 times more likely to have end-stage renal disease resulting in the need for dialysis or kidney transplantation. Organ donation and transplantation in AIs is scarcely researched and literature available reports they are unlikely to be organ donors due to cultural beliefs.

The purpose of this study is to share the experiences of Ojibwe AIs related to the organ donation and transplantation process formulated through recollection of personal involvement as an organ donor or recipient. Findings: Ojibwe AIs were willing to be living organ donors and, without regret, encourage others to donate. Intra- and intercultural clashes were evident through living donor experiences but participants were able to find resolution and donate. Deceased organ donation is rarely done in the AI population because of spiritual beliefs and lack of personal connection to the recipient. Recipients experienced hopelessness prior to transplantation, and then found hope with their new organs. Waiting, distance to healthcare facilities, and enhanced spirituality were relevant for all donors and recipients. All donors and recipients were grateful to give or receive “a second chance”. Conclusion: Research must be conducted studying other indigenous peoples to acquire adequate knowledge and understanding of their experiences and decision-making processes around organ donation. Healthcare professionals must be aware that indigenous peoples struggle with the concept of transplantation and broach conversations armed with cultural knowledge and sensitivity.

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