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**EVOLIUCINĖ MEDICINA:
ŽMOGAUS RAIDOS PERSPEKTYVOS IR SVEIKATA
BESIKEIČIANČIOJE APLINKOJE**

**EVOLUTIONARY MEDICINE:
PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH
CONSEQUENCES IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT**

Rengėjas:

Vilniaus universiteto Medicinos ir sveikatos mokslų
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Organized by

the Doctoral School of Medicine and Health sciences
at Vilnius University, VU Faculty of Medicine

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CAN TRUST SAVE LIVES? RETHINKING ORGAN DONATION MODELS IN LITHUANIA

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A transplant may be a triumph of modern medicine, but before surgery, immunology, or logistics, one essential step must occur: someone must agree to donate. In transplantation, life-saving technology depends on a deeply human decision.

Lithuania currently uses an opt-in organ donation model, where donation requires explicit consent from the individual or, often, from relatives. However, donation rates remain below the European Union average. This raises an important question: is the challenge the legal model itself, or the level of public knowledge, trust, and acceptability surrounding it?

This Science Slam presentation introduces a doctoral dissertation analysing organ donation models in the Baltic States and seeking to identify the most suitable national model for Lithuania. The research compares opt-in, opt-out, mandatory choice, and mixed approaches, considering donation outcomes alongside ethical, legal, cultural, behavioural, and communication-related factors. It combines comparative analysis, a representative survey of Lithuanian residents, and semi-structured interviews with experts in healthcare, law, bioethics, communication, policy, and related fields.

Rather than asking only which model appears most effective on paper, this dissertation asks which model could genuinely work in Lithuania's social and cultural context. It explores how attitudes toward organ donation are shaped by information, trust in healthcare, ethical and religious beliefs, family influence, fears, and misconceptions.

The central idea is simple: organ donation systems do not function merely because they are written into law. They work when people understand them, accept them, and trust them. By identifying factors that influence donation-related decisions in Lithuania, this dissertation aims to offer evidence-based and culturally sensitive recommendations for national policy, communication, and public engagement.

Ultimately, the presentation asks a question with life-or-death relevance: can changing a legal model save lives, or must we first change the relationship between society, medicine, and trust?

Keywords: bioethics, Lithuania, organ donation, public trust, transplantation