

Sale of human organs - ethical argument



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Many people have felt the shock and disbelief that comes with losing a family member or someone close, but the feeling is worse when their death could have been prevented. People often die of organ failure or conditions associated with organs while on a transplant list. In the United States alone, tens of thousands hope for an organ, and thousands die waiting each year (Karimi). By legalizing the sale of human organs, there is a greater chance of increasing organ supply and decreasing the number of lives lost.

According to the National Organ Transplant Act of 1984, the buying and selling or compensation for organs from any human for the purpose of transplantation is illegal (Linde). The only organs available to patients in need, are one's from donors whether it be a car crash victim or a spouse with matching blood and tissue type. However, these donations do not cover all of the people in need of an organ, which means around 18 people die everyday because of the fact there are simply not enough (Karimi).

The government should legalize the sale or compensation of human organs. In doing so, the number of available organs will increase and make it easier for patients to find an organ match. This will also increase the number of live organ donors, allowing a longer life span for the organs donated as compared to cadaver organs. The compensations also give people in need another option to obtain money, however the choice to give out of the goodness of one's heart is still present.

The most important reason why we should legalize human organ sales is the lack of available organ supply. With compensation for donating an organ, more people would be willing to give up a part of themselves. In doing so,

the transplant waiting list will decrease, if not disappear. In Iran, there is a kidney program that openly allows payments. This has helped to effectively eliminate the country's kidney transplant waiting list since 1999 (Karimi). Many doctors and experts have urged America along with other nations to consider adopting these aspects of Iran's system (Karimi).

A large number of people die because along with the shortage of organs, they are not able to find a suitable donor. Choosing an appropriate donor for a patient is not a simple task. There are a lot of factors that should be considered such as type of the blood, medical urgency, health of the donor, distance from donor, etc. According to Bhattacharya, there is large shortage of organs all over the world. To be specific, in the US, about 75, 000 were waiting for the kidney transplants in 2008, but only 18, 000 got their kidneys; about 4, 000 of those Americans have died, waiting until the end of 2009. (Linde) According to Nasser Karimi, thousands more people could be saved if medical staff searched for possible donors more often. Therefore, an increase in the number of organs available will make the process of finding a matching organ much easier.

A benefit to the sale or donation of live human donors' organs, is the fact that living organs last much longer than cadaver organs. An example is explained by Nasser Karimi in his article when he explicates that "...kidneys from a living donor have a significantly better long-term survival rate than those from a deceased donor." The average kidney from a diseased donor lasts 10 years, while one from a living donor averages about 15 years (Karimi). This principle can also add on to the number of lives saved via transplant.

Over the past years, hundreds of thousand of transplants have been performed with organs from living donors who acted out of the sense of common humanity or love. While donating out of the goodness of one's heart is used for some, many people often need money for a variety of reasons. By legalizing the compensation for organs, people in need would have another option to pay for things like retirement, college tuition, bills, etc. Another issue to come up is the amount of money that should be given as compensation to the donor. Many say a person can not put a price on organs. The system to set the price would be very organized and involve different factors including the type of organ and the distance from the patient (Marchione). Many experts all suggest that organ sales would give advantage to the wealthy and disadvantage to the poor (Lopez). However as explained above, there is not a set price on the organ, meaning negotiations will make the final decision.

The government should legalize the sale of organs because of the many benefits it has to offer. With compensations for donors, lives will be saved, organ supply will skyrocket and it will be easier for a patient to find a match. This in turn will offer a more readily available supply of organs. Lives will be saved and deaths will be prevented with the legalization of organ sales..