

Term paper on ethical issues in organ transplants

[Family](#), [Abortion](#)



Ethical issues in organ transplants

Introduction

In order to know the ethical issues in organ transplant then one has to know the definition of organ transplant. There are also the causes of organ transplant and risks of having organ transplant. Due to the risks of organ transplant, many people have different views of it. This is what sometimes influences peoples' decisions on whether to have organ transplant or not. There are various organs in the body that are transplanted and they include the liver, kidneys, heart, lungs, thymus, pancreas, and the intestines. There are also tissues that are transplanted such as the heart valves, cornea, skin, veins and bones. Organ transplant is defined as the motion in which doctors remove organs from one healthy body to another who is sick or the organs are damaged.

The kidneys and the liver are the most transplanted organs in the world. While the most commonly transplanted tissues are the corneas. The organ donors can be either dead or alive. Tissues are the only part of the organ transplant that can be banked or stored for a period of up to five years. The organs that the living people donate are the kidneys, skin, liver, bone marrow, blood transfusion and bones. The deceased or brain dead humans whose organs are in good shape usually donate their pancreas, stomach, hands, cornea, lungs and the heart.

Ethical issues related to organ transplant

There are various reasons that lead to ethical issues in the society regarding organ transplant. These ethical issues come from the recipient of the organ,

the donor either dead or alive, the allocation of limited resources and the procedures of getting the organs and the tissues.

The ethical or moral issues with the recipient

When a person with organ failure is about to receive a donated organ they must be of sound mind so that they can be able to be taught of the risks of getting organs, the cost of organ transplant, the recovery therapy, and the burdens of having the surgery. When the individuals are incapable of making any decisions then they are therefore, made decisions by their guardians.

The guardians are required to make decisions that will be appropriate for the recipient. The recipients are required to not intimidate, threaten, offer money and blackmail the donor. This is considered very unethical or moral because this does not respect the donor privacy and it does not consider the other recipient needs. The recipients have a moral duty to ensure that they do not receive any organ illegally.

There are many reasons that cause a recipient or a guardian to practice immoral acts such as bribery in order to get an organ but the most common reason is to save a person's life. There are churches such as the Jehovah witness that will influence a person's decision whether to accept an organ or not. This at times can be seen to be honorable, but it can have fatal results. This has caused some people to be taken to court in order to force them to accept the organs. This may be a good gesture but if the patient is not willing it will become a burden that will cause the patient to give up on life and end up committing suicide. In some cases, there are organ donors who might be HIV positive therefore; it is up to the doctors to take measures that will make the recipient not to get the virus.

The ethical issues for the donors

The living human beings

There are ethical issues when it comes to organ transplant among the living because a person is left without an organ for they donate it to benefit another. According to the catholic theologies, they argued that the organ transplant from one person to another is unethical but when a person uses another tissue in their bodies in order to save their own life then it becomes ethical (Shroff 2012). When a healthy individual wants to donate their organs then they have a right to education about the risks of donating an organ that can range from success or failure of the organs and sometimes death.

The catholic churches believe that people should do whatever it takes to save a life but they do not believe in using extraordinary measures such as transplant because it will lead to burden's for the donors who will end up in surgeries that are painful and will be costly for the donor in cases of complications. The adults who are competent have a right to donate their organs as they wish as long as it does cause any health risks. Therefore, they can consent to donation of organs but for any person who is not competent will not be allowed to donate their organs. It is ethical to say that the living donors should never be liable or donate their organs because they do not know the unforeseen complications and risks after donation.

The guardians are the ones that make the choices of the competent people who are the children and the mentally ill. Their job is to make sure that what they are doing is for the benefit of the people they are in charge. There are organs such as the kidneys that are argued that should not be donated by the living human beings because there are other alternatives that can be

used such as renal dialysis before the patient gets a deceased organ. It is also moral for any human being to donate their organs in order to save life thus will make a person feel better psychologically. It is immoral to conceive children in order for them to be used for donation purposes such as bone marrow transplant. This goes against the dignity of how God created human beings and their purpose in the world. This is also mistreating because according to this the infants job in the world is to be treated as an experiment for others benefits. When a living human being donates their organ freely then they should be treated with the outmost care in terms of post treatment after the organ transplant.

The human fetus

It is considered moral for the fetus's brain or tissues to be used for transplant in order to save lives or individuals with the Parkinson's diseases. The same rules that apply to deceased adults will apply to the fetus in terms of organ transplant. It is believed that when a woman who wants to abort should think twice and give the fetus to the organ transplant because it could be useful to others who require organs (Simson 2012). This could cause the mother to feel good because they did not abort for nothing because other children or adults in the world benefited from their fetus. This however does not justify their evil intention of killing an unborn child since a fetus does have a heartbeat.

Donation from anencephalic infants

These are infants that are born when most part of their brain is absent. In most cases, these infants do not survive but in some rare cases, they survive

after a few months or weeks. According to the reports the infants sometimes cry therefore, meaning they can be conscious. This means that they are human beings, and should therefore be treated as such. Their organs could be viable because they are most times brain dead therefore, their parents have a choice to make regarding their organs being used to save lives.

Organ transplant from the deceased

It is ethical when a relative or guardian of a person who is deceased to donate their organs for the sake of saving a life. When an individual is alive, they can donate their body for organ transplant once they are dead in order to help those who are sick. This is a very good gesture that no one has the right to condemn but should instead praise him or her for caring about the welfare of others (Shroff 2012). This kind of donations has low risks because the donor will not be harmed because they are already dead. There are cases where one refuses to donate their body to organ transplant once dead because of their religion.

There are organs that are unethical for donation such as the reproductive organs that will change the genetic individuality of a person especially children. This is because one is transplanted with these organs such as the ovary or the testicles of the deceased donor rather than their biological parents (Simson 2012). There have been ethical and legal battles about a person donating their body for organ transplant once dead. This is because of the respect that the dead people should be given concerning their wishes, family wishes and the common good. When a person donates their organs for the sole purpose of saving, lives there should be boundaries of the degree the organs are removed.

Ethical issues about the allocation of limited resource

The demands for organs are very high but the supply is limited because not many people are willing to donate their organs. This therefore, makes it very difficult when it comes to who should be given the organ first. This brings about ethical issues regarding life and death of individuals in terms of who get the organs or those who do not. There are criteria's that have been formulated in order to help those who need the organs urgently first (GM 2003). There are also measures that are taken in order to ensure that the patient does not reject the organ transplanted and therefore, they find if the patient has other life threatening disease that will cause the organ to be rejected.

The psychological profile of the recipient should be observed before and after the surgery so that to ensure that the persons does not give up on life. This is crucial because without the will power of the recipient then there is no way for the patient to survive. It is very important for a recipient to have family members besides them especially during the recovery process. The potential recipient to get organs are usually the ones who are considered first when organs are available. There are some places where they use the social status of an individual in order to give them organs. The social statuses of people are from race, gender, age, wealth and religion. This is unethical because every person has a right to receive organs regardless of their social status. It is argued that people who do not take care of their organs such as heavy smokers and alcohol drinkers should not be given organs (Altman 1990).

There are shortages of organs that have led to the transplant of animal

organs. According to research, there are some animal parts that have been medically approved to be transplanted to humans and they are the pig's heart valves and insulin from animals' pancreases. There are other researches of animal's organs being used to see whether it will work such as when a child was given the heart of a baboon. This brought about outcry from various people such as the animal rights groups and concerned groups of whether the organ would work. According to the people who are experimenting on animal human transplant, they believe that this will cause low risks of rejection of the organ transplant.

In any case that this experiment would work then this means that the shortage of organs will reduce. The artificial organs are another way that doctors have found to help reduce the shortage of organs. Good examples of these organs are the artificial limbs, pacemakers and synthetic heart valves. These artificial organs or tissues are very expensive especially the long term renal dialysis. The estimated value of the artificial organs example the kidneys are \$20, 000, the liver is 120, 000 and the heart is 60, 000 (Hinterholzer 2008). There should be a way for the government to reduce the cost of the artificial organs because there are people who cannot afford.

The ethical issues for procurement of organs or tissues

Many people believe that selling of organs should be done because it can respect the people's autonomy while there are those who argue against it. While there are those who argue against the selling of organs believe that once an organ has been sold it will cause the donor to have no say on the matter. There are people who are rich in the society therefore they will be able to out bid those with less money thus leading to death of the recipient

who needed it the most. By not legalizing selling of organs, it leads to the kidnapping or killings of people in order to extract their organs, which are sold in the black market. These organs at times are not well stored therefore, once a person is transplanted will end up killing them or lead to rejection of the organ. There are people who use the media to announce their need of getting a certain organ. This will deprive those who are on the waiting list because there will be volunteers to donate their organs. By using media, it brings about the awareness about the shortage of organs and it could make people donate their organs to save lives.

In conclusion, the ethical issues in regards to organ transplant range from the recipient, diseased donor, living donor, infants, and fetus. The recipient donors are the one that can make decisions on whether they are willing to accept organ transplant. Once they make this decision, it is the doctors' opportunity to inform the recipient of all the advantages and disadvantages of organ transplant. When the recipient is not able to make decisions then the guardians are in charge of all medical decisions. The donors have a right to donate or not. There are many ethical advantages of donating organs such as psychological pleasure in knowing that you just saved a life. Donors should not be pressured, threatened or given bribery to donate their organs. This is very unethical and immoral because it shows that people do not respect life. It is not ethical for a guardian to donate the organs of infants, mentally insane people or children. This is because they do not know the risks involved or the advantage of doing it. The doctors should formulate criteria's that will help reduce the number of cases of organ rejection. This is because there are fewer organs to donate to all patients.

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