

The downside of organ donation

Sociology



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The practice could also become socially destabilizing in that consideration of money to be gained by a person's family after their death might encourage the altruistic person to refuse lifesaving or preserving medical treatment.

With the growth of medical technology such as organ transplants [and donations], other ethical questions have evolved. Some revolve around the medical necessities involved in gleaning organs from a person who may be brain dead but not dead by technical definition. According to "... current laws it is generally necessary for these [certain] organs to be removed from a heart-beating donor" (Caplan and Coelho 27). Also, recent discussions regarding expanding "fundamental changes in the permissible limits of organ procurement" (Caplan and Coelho 30) reinforce a Frankenstein image that does not sit well with many potential donors.

Some religions, such as Shinto, also frown on organ donation for the very specific reason that the body of the deceased person must remain intact upon cremation. No amount of medical rationalizing is likely to change long-standing religious beliefs.

The ultimate downside of organ donation, however, is the well-publicized harvesting of organs among the poor of third world countries.

Works Cited

David-Ben, Orit Brawer. Body Organs as an Exchangeable Socio-Cultural Resource. Westport, Ct: Praeger, 2005.

Caplan Arthur L. and Daniel H. Coelho. The Ethics of Organ Transplants: The Current Debate. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1998.