

Response to "the survival lottery"

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I would object to the idea of "The Survival Lottery". The proposal of the survival lottery mainly centres on the claim that there is no difference between killing and letting die, and that leaving Y and Z to die without any interventions would be the same as murdering them. Thus, instead of killing both Y and Z, the doctor should kill A, a third-party, and save both Y and Z's lives, because such action would result in a total of one death instead of two. Since it would be begging the question to argue whether there is a difference between killing and letting die, we, at this time being, can assume that they are the same. It may seem that utilitarians ought to be in favour of this proposal as it results in maximum utility. However, my concern is that the calculation in total amount of happiness might not be as simple as it appears to be. Such calculation involves two acts, one in which causes pleasure (saving 2 lives), and one which causes massive pain (taking an innocent life away); in this case, pain is unavoidably involved, and we have the duty to minimize the pain. Y and Z may argue that the pain of killing A is obviously much less than killing both Y and Z, which result in an extra death. Yet, this calculation does not take into consideration of the massive disturbance of the society in general if the lottery system is in tact. Since every person fundamentally has a desire to live and feel secure, this means that with the lottery system, every single healthy person alive would be living in fear and uncertainty every day of either they will be forced to give up some of their organs, or their lives, without wills to do so. This loss of security or terror in society is a form of pain that is not taken into the calculation, and this effect is too massive as it would disturb the great amount of populations, and thus, outweighs the happiness that is resulted from saving the lives of Y and Z. Y and Z might argue that this is discrimination against the unhealthy patients

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as it takes consideration of the healthy population (assuming that they would not want to give up their lives to save the unhealthy) above the needs of the unhealthy; where it does not consider the feeling of uncertainty and fear in the unhealthy units—they are living in an even greater amount of terror knowing the impending death. Secondly, they might argue that based on the number of healthy population, the chance of being called upon is very slim; moreover, healthy units could at some point in their lives be in need of the transplant as well, and in that case, the society in general should feel more secured because whenever that they need a transplant, they know that their chance of survival would be much greater with the lottery system in place, so everyone, at some point, would benefit from this system. To answer Y and Z's first argument, it is really begging the question to argue whether the healthy population would have greater suffering or the unhealthy population would have greater suffering, one cannot simply argue that the amount of fear in the unhealthy population is greater than that of the healthy population (that would be discriminating the healthy); we must look at all population equally. Second, human beings should have their rights to make the decision regarding their chances of survival. Even though the chance of being called upon to sacrifice is slim and the chance of survival when one does get sick is greater, it is up to each individual's choice to take such chance.