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Ethical Issues in Organ Allocation

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CEOT CUTTING EDGE OF TRANSPLANTATION

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BALANCING EQUITY AND UTILITY IN THE FACE OF AN ORGAN SHORTAGE

Disclosure

I serve on OPTN's Ethics Committee, but these comments represent my own views, not the views of OPTN or the federal government.

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the general bioethical principles of allocating scarce goods.

2. Explicate the way in which OPTN current policy incorporates these principles.

3. Interrogate controversies of conflicting principles.

Principles for Allocating Scarce Medical Goods (Generally)

- Lottery
- First-Come first-served
- Sickest first
- Youngest first (age weighting)
- Save the most lives
- Save the most life years (prognosis)
- Instrumental value
- Reciprocity

Persad et al., *Principles for allocation of scarce medical interventions*, 373 Lancet 423 (2009)

OPTN Principles

- Utility
- Justice (aka “equity”)
- Respect for Persons (including autonomy)
- Potential for Conflicts

OPTN, *Ethical Principles in the Allocation of Human Organs* (last updated June 2015)