



# A Deep Dive Into Ideals of Organ Transplantation

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Countless lives are saved per year due to the generous gift of organ transplantation. This medical procedure remarkably affects those who were critically ill with a lost or non-functioning essential organ. This field of transplanting comes with various protocols that every transplant surgeon must follow. Specifically, one of the most important, non-operational regulations that all organ transplant surgeons are required to conform to is ethics. Ethics (in this case) are the basic norms medics comply with for every patient, independent of their overall status.

An example of ethics that doctors are obligated to understand includes the preferences of the patients or their legal guardians. Whether they are good or bad, they legally must be respected. For instance, a controversial preference can include a parental choice of denying a brain implant to their child who has endured severe brain issues. Although an unusual decision like that is unlikely, such a choice must be respected if it is made. It indicates why ethics are crucial to understand because they honor the rights of individuals and protect against any conflicts from occurring.

Organ transplantation is deemed a lifesaving procedure because it helps and protects individuals who are suffering from the failure or loss of an organ. These are some important ethics doctors must follow prior to transplanting any organ. According to Organ Procurement & Transplantation Network (OPTN): “In that regard, this White Paper refers to "utility", "justice", and “respect for persons” as the major ethical principles to be balanced to achieve an equitable outcome in the allocation of organs for transplantation” (OPTN, 2015), those

ethics are required for doctors whenever patient(s) are in a situation where organ transplanting can be conducted.

**Utility:** represents maximizing all benefits of organ transplantation for persons (giving organs that provide a better quality of life to one).

**Justice:** refers to how organs should be distributed equally without bias (by one's race, financial status, age, sex, etc.).

**Respect for Persons:** indicates that the rights of individuals should be comprehended (patients' individualistic choices, consent, and consideration of one's values/preferences).

Obeying these principles is required, although some may conflict with each other if surgeons make poor decisions. For example, giving an organ to someone with a better chance of survival (utility) instead of to a critically ill person (justice). Other ethics include: non-maleficence (the act of not causing any harm to the patient or surroundings), benevolence (performing good deeds as best as possible, especially for saving/improving lives by implanting organs to people in desperate need), and self-autonomy (decisions of the subject). In comparison to other medical fields like CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation), these ethics are very similar/the same (justice, preferences, consent, and more are utilized in these two fields). In summary, morality is required in organ transplanting (along with other emergency medical care fields) because it prevents any mishap occurring among people who are in different circumstances.

The ethic of inquiring consent has stemmed from some recent modifications, and also sparked some disputes among medical professionals. Prior to this advancement, people who lacked any organs were provided care nonconsensually. Although it seems benevolent to supply one with as much treatment as possible, unfortunately, not everyone has acceded to the policy of recovering individuals free of any explicit permission. One unlawful requirement beforehand was that some people had no choice but to donate an organ. Eventually, the requirement was abolished as doctors and the government discerned that it was unethical. Deceased individuals were also assumed to have their organs donated, although some families object to the plan. The Opt-In or Out model, also referenced as presumed consent, is the consensual-related ethic that doctors heed. Nowadays, consent is currently implied, reducing all sorts of discord amid people. While employing the law of consent for organ transplantation appears humane, it has led to webs of complexity. Groups have debated whether this new enactment was rational, even though there were numerous high approval ratings of consent being further appointed: "Consent in medical practice is a process riddled with layers of complexities. To some

extent, this is inevitable given that different medical conditions raise different sets of issues for doctors and patients. Informed consent and risk assessment are highly significant public health issues...”, “Consent to undergo solid organ transplantation is more complex than most surgical and other clinical interventions because of the many factors involved, the complexity of the options and the need to balance competing risks” (Raza & Neuberger, 2022); this quote demonstrates that ethical concerns are rising, as many perceive consent as not just an agreement to having an implant, but an entire system of medical, emotional, and ethical consideration. To conclude, patients should not hesitate to express explicit consent for organ transplantation, notwithstanding their general conditions.

In summary, organ transplantation ethics are expected to be obeyed by medical personnel for the purpose of fairness to every client. Regardless of one’s overall background, they are guaranteed to obtain equitable access to organs. There are many ethics for this practice, and those act as potential safeguards, protecting the rights of individuals in very critical medical situations. Ultimately, the purpose of ethics in organ transplantation is not just to support transplant technology or surgical procedures but to ensure that morality is represented at every step of the process.

## References

*Ethics - Ethical Principles in the Allocation of Human Organs* - OPTN.

<https://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/professionals/by-topic/ethical-considerations/ethical-principles-in-the-allocation-of-human-organs/>. Accessed 26 Jul. 2025.

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