

# Distribution of human organs for transplant.

US275 Scientific Ethics  
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Justice is providing a fair and equal process for determining who receives scarce organs.

- equal access
  - fair and unbiased
- according to need
  - maximum benefit



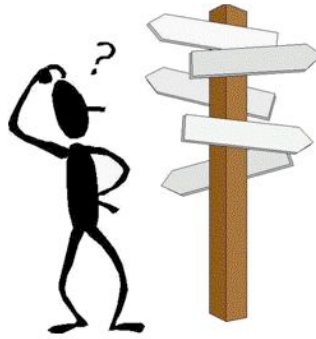
Merit-based systems have inherent subjective criteria and potential biases.

- according to effort
- according to contribution
- according to free-market exchanges



## Providing equal access to organs means using objective, unbiased criteria.

- length of time waiting
  - first come, first served
  - but people waiting longer may be sicker and less likely to have a long-term positive outcome
- age
  - youngest to oldest



## There is an argument that using completely unbiased considerations is biased against worthy individuals.

- medical bias
  - What if lifestyle contributed to damage to organ?
- social bias
  - Where to place of prisoners on waiting list?



## Considering the maximum benefit of the transplant examines the long-term effects of the organ transplant.

- medical need
  - sickest individuals given priority
- success of the transplant
  - organ given to the person that will most likely live the longest.



## There are arguments against the maximum benefit criteria.

- What is considered a successful outcome?
  - years of survival
  - quality of life
- length of survival after transplant is biased against older people.



## How are decisions in the United States made about organ distribution?

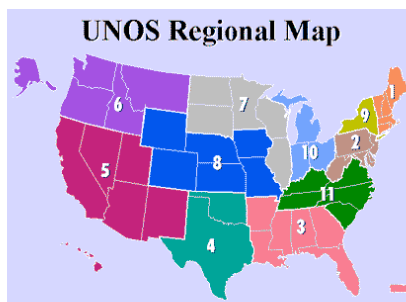
- Each organ procurement center procurement organization and transplant center

- have their own criteria

**AOPO**  
Association of  
Organ Procurement  
Organizations

## The United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) recommends but does not mandate criteria.

- medical need
- probability of success
- time on the waiting list



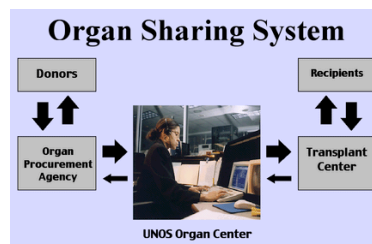
Applying these three criteria is still subject to bias and subjectivity.

- What do the criteria mean
  - what is success?
  - what is need?
- How should criteria be weighed?
  - which is most important?



As long as the supply of available organs is limited, any system will be imperfect.

- increasing the supply of organs
  - to meet the demand (need)
  - reduces the impact that ranking decisions make on who does and does not receive an organ.



[www.medscape.com](http://www.medscape.com)

**TO BE CONTINUED**

Part 2. Distribution of Organs:  
Using incentives to increase  
availability of human organs.

# Any Questions?

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<http://www.vippitbullkennels.com/images/animated-question-mark.gif>