The human marketplace: The ethical and medical challenges of illicit organ trafficking

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Challenges to Organ Procurement in the United States

In 2007, the World Health Organization estimated that between 5-10% of all kidney and liver transplants performed around the world annually were conducted with illicitly obtained organs, averaging out to around 5,000-7,000 illegal transplants each year.

In 2016, the American Journal of Medicine released a survey showing that out of 1011 respondents, 59% indicated that a payment of $50,000 would make them more likely to donate.

According to the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), only about 15% of all patients on the waiting list. Everyday, approximately 22 people on the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) die before ever receiving their anticipated organs. Around 110 people then replace these individuals by the end of the very same day. As the available supply of healthy organs continues to dwindle, international waitlists continue to grow, and more and more people die each day from organ failure, the international black market on organs grows more enticing.

While transplant medicine has seen tremendous advancements over the previous decades, the number of total transplants performed globally covers only 15% of all patients on the waiting list. Everyday, approximately 22 people on the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) die before ever receiving their anticipated organs. Around 110 people then replace these individuals by the end of the very same day. As the available supply of healthy organs continues to dwindle, international waitlists continue to grow, and more and more people die each day from organ failure, the international black market on organs grows more enticing.

In 2011, the US based Institute for Global Financial Integrity estimated that revenues from illicit organ trafficking ranged from $600 million to $1.2 billion per year. While this may seem like a hidden goldmine for readers thinking of a way to make a quick buck, research also revealed that less than 50% of organ transaction funds go to the donors themselves.

ORGAN TRAFFICKING SPANS INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES

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