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A Proposed Solution for the Black Market

Faced with desperate circumstances, individuals turn to the black market organ trade for an opportunity to live. Due to a shortage of human organ donors, thousands of people are placed on an organ waiting list. An average of 18 people die each day awaiting an organ transplant (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, The Need is Real: Data, 2014). An individual’s only salvation from death is to find an available organ donor, which can be done by turning to the black market organ trade. However, the sale and transfer of human organs is prohibited under United States Code (United States Code. 2010 Edition). For those awaiting organ transplants, the desire to live is a persisting desire. The black market carries the opportunity to save individuals’ lives but in doing so, many lives are taken advantage of. Iran is the only country that has eliminated organ waiting lists and the shortage of organ donors by legalizing the sale of human organs. By doing so, individuals have a legal opportunity to purchase organs from government controlled agencies and regulations. Though the black market will not vanish all together, the decreased use of it decreases the amount of individuals that are exploited by this illegal trade. It is time for countries to follow the footsteps of Iran by legalizing the sale of human organs to free individuals from organ waiting lists and exploitation while providing a reduction in the use of the black market organ trade.

The shortage of human organ donors results in waiting lists holding thousands of people and growth for the black market. By legalizing the sale and transfer of human organs, the shortage of human organ donors can be eliminated. Having individuals donate for altruistic reasons only will not boost the amount of organ donors needed. Payment following the sale of one’s organs can be a motive for an increased amount of organ donors. In providing a legal alternative, the usage of the black market has potential to decrease. With a decrease in the black market organ trade, fewer individuals of all financial standings will be exploited. The reason why the black market organ trade flourishes is because a legal opportunity is not provided for individuals in need of an organ transplant. In Iran, the only country where the sale of human organs is legalized, people have the opportunity to apply to a nonprofit organization by the name of Dialysis and Transplant Patients Association (Tabarrock, Alex. The Wall Street Journal. Tackling the Organ Shortage. 2010. para 11). The organization then matches the patient to an available organ donor after which the organ transplantation can take place. By having organizations regulate organ donor applicants and recipients there should not be a reason for endless waiting lists. The health and compatibility of the organ will be taken into deeper consideration than those organs transplanted through the black market. Legalizing the sale of human organs can provide a decrease in the black market organ trade while better circumstances are provided for both the organ donor and the recipient.

The legalization of the sale of human organs will cut organ donor waiting lists and decrease the exploitation of both parties involved. According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, every ten minutes an individual is added to the waiting list and an average of 79 people will receive an organ transplant each day (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, The Need is Real: Data, 2014). These numbers show that the shortage of organ donors is a problem that needs to be resolved as soon as possible. If the sale of human organs were to be legalized, the waiting lists would not have to be in existence. By providing payment for donated organs, more donors would be available. Having an increased availability of organ donors allows individuals to receive the proper care and medical procedures necessary in an orderly fashion without spending months on an endless waiting list.

Through the existence of the black market, both the organ donor and the recipient of the organ are exploited. By legalizing the sale of human organs, laws and regulations will provide boundaries for the industry. In an illegal industry, the well being of both parties is not considered. Nawaraj Pariyar, a victim of organ traffickers, states that he was told by the traffickers to say that he was the sister of the organ recipient (Sugam Pokharel. CNN World. Nepal’s Organ Trail: How traffickers steal kidneys. 2014). He is one of thousands of people that are exploited by traffickers whose main intent is to gain financial profit. Physicians should review the compatibility of both the donor and recipient’s blood to decrease the risk of organ rejection (John Hopkins Medicine. Comprehensive Transplant Center. Blood Compatibility. n,d,). The incompatibility of the organs can deter the performance of the transplanted organ. In using the black market, one does not know the compatibility, performance, and sufficiency of the organ. It is through regulations and thoroughness that the well being of both parties is taken into consideration. In the black market that main focus is how much profit can be made from the donor and the purchaser of the organ. Legalizing the right to sell human organs carries potential to save thousands of lives.

Iran is the only country that has legalized the sale of human organs. In an effort to prevent organ transplant tourism, both parties must be of the same nationality (Griffin, Anne. *U.S. National Library of Medicine.* National Institutes of Health. Iranian Organ Donation: Kidneys on demand. 2007. para. 10). The government provides compensation for organ donors. Money plays an important role in the abundance of available organ donors. Through the involvement of government-controlled agencies, individuals receive necessary medical care during the organ transplantation and recovery. The system established by Iran is one that should be used as a model for other countries. The black market organ trade treats both the organ donor and recipient with manipulation, disregard, and exploitation. With government involvement and regulations, individuals are treated with dignity during the process of organ transplantation.

Even by legalizing the sale of human organs, the black market will not disappear into thin air. People will always find a way to abuse the system. However, the legalization of the sale of human organs hold potential to decrease the use of the black market. Many individuals are manipulated and taken advantage of by human organ traffickers. The manipulation can cause potential harm to both the organ donor and recipient. Taylor, J, a scholar, provides his opinion on the black market organ trade. He states, “At minimum … a market should require that vendors give their informed consent to the sale of their kidneys, that they not be coerced into selling their kidneys by a third party and that they receive adequate post-operative care.” (Taylor, J. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. The Sale of Human Organs. 2011). Human traffickers are out in search of financial profit, disregarding the lives that are affected. Though many disagree with the legalization of the sale of human due to the thought that those of low financial standing will be at higher risk of exploitation, it is not so. The organ transplanted controls the life of the organ recipient. With the non-existing medical screenings it is highly possible that the organ is incompatible. Traffickers see a vulnerable victim that can be easily manipulated. Through this, the life of the recipient of the organ can carry a different outcome than hoped for. Another reason is established to legalize the sale of human organs. The black market does not exploit just those of lower financial standing. The recipient’s life is at stake in turning to the black market. Each individual should be treated in equality and in a just way. The black market organ trade holds no hope for resolving the manipulation and exploitation of desperate individuals.

The lives of thousands of people are at stake. Each day people perish due to the shortage of human organ donors and the ban on the sale and purchase of human organs. Legalizing the sale of human organs would provide thousands of individuals a legal and regulated life-saving opportunity. Due to the prohibition of the sale of human organs under United States Code, the black market flourishes in the perfect environment. Traffickers have the ideal opportunity to create profit off of vulnerable and desperate people from both parties involved. The health and well being of the participants is disregarded. Through the legalization of the sale of human organs, individuals have a much safer and trusted outlet to turn to for salvation. The government needs to take control of the black market organ trade and save the lives from the exploitation and disregard from human traffickers. There are many individuals who die each day because there is an insufficient amount of organ donors available. Providing payment for organ donors gives more motives to donate one’s organs. The precious lives of people can and should be preserved through the legalization of the sale of human organs resulting in a decreased need for the black market.

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