

This response was submitted to the consultation held by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics on Give and take? Human bodies in medicine and research between April 2010 and July 2010. The views expressed are solely those of the respondent(s) and not those of the Council.

Alex Nolan

### **Question 16**

I provide this comment with the caveat that I'm not a professional in any medical or academic field, I have recently completed a module on law and medicine as part of my LLB, hence my interest: Any form of incentive for organs may be unethical, the reason for this is that it may detract Government, public organisations and private companies from endeavoring in future research into preventative medicines and improved tools and techniques in overcoming diseases. I shall use kidney transplants as an example, though the same applies to other organs and human material. Should an incentive be brought in for kidney harvesting for the purpose of transplantation it may well have the benefit of solving the individual patient's illness. However if the money in the pot for kidney transplants is also the same for research then logically the finance available for research into preventative medicines or new technologies would subsequently be reduced. Without research funding or incentives to research, the medical problems of patients today are the same of those of the patients of tomorrow. I am in favour of some form of incentive to help people who are suffering from disease today, however it should not be done without taking a view of the long term effects. If we solve the mortality problem of the lack of kidneys that we currently have, then we paper over the problem which is the disease that has led to the illness necessitating organ transplant. The more that we can prevent the diseases or improve technologies such as personal portable dialysis machines then the less suffering the patients of the future will have to endure. Is this 'future research' a valid consideration when deciding the ethics of how we pursue organ transplantation and the extension of organ harvesting policies?