

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.

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Question 1

No.

Question 2

No. Human bodily material per se has no 'intrinsic' ethical properties or implications whatsoever. There is thus no difference between blood or heart. The ethical implications depend on 1. the nature of our practice with the material (what we do, and how), 2. the social context of that practice, 3. the beneficiaries and victims of the practice.

Question 3

Of course, there are differences, but they are universally technical, not ethical. The time of the procurement has no 'intrinsic' ethical properties or implications whatsoever. Again, the ethical implications depend only on 1. What we do, 2. How we do, 3. The social context of our practice, 4. The beneficiaries and victims of that practice.

Question 4

This question, as it is put, is completely abstract. It must be put in context. Each individual case is unique as far as the costs, risks, and benefits are concerned. These depend on the context.

Question 5

See question number 4.

Question 6

1. Profiteering 2. Cost-containment

Question 7

Yes. I would not provide material for any financial purpose (profiteering or saving). Nor would I provide material for a dubious scientific agenda.

Question 8

I would be willing to participate in such a trial only if it were to be done by the public system and for the benefit of the public.

Question 9

All the values mentioned have been abused at some point by someone. They reveal their true nature only in context. The context is invariably that of power relations, beneficiaries and victims. In other words, don't tell me what is or isn't ethical. Tell

me cui bono, cui malo. It is time to abandon the sentimentalist-metaphysical ethical discourse and replace it with a critique of the political economy of medicine.

Question 10

This is like asking whether 'Arbeit macht frei'(work makes free) should take priority over 'Jedem das seine'(to each his due). Two great values indeed. So, for crying out loud, tell me who is asking and what they are up to before I can give a reasonable answer.

Question 11

1. For free only. Any type of 'compensation' - a euphemism for commerce - reflects the buyer capitalising on some coercion to which the vendor has been exposed. 2. The type and the purpose of the material is totally irrelevant.

Question 12

The question is purely metaphysical. It should be rephrased: can people develop any interest in providing material before or after death? The answer is of course yes - depending on the circumstances.

Question 13

Again, the question is metaphysical. It should be rephrased: can people develop interests in participating in trials? The answer is yes. E.g., if the happiness of others is a condition for their own happiness; if the trial offers them some hope in the face of hopelessness. Note that the latter possibility may not only reflect the limitations of the best current treatment (in which case taking part in the trial would be reasonable), but also denial of treatment (in which case participation would reflect social coercion).

Question 14

No, absolutely not. That depends not on the type of the demand but on the implications of meeting it and the practices involved. For example, meeting the demand for kidneys could indeed save life, but, I believe, that doing so by ethicalising the unethical or by medicalising the non-medical, would result in loss of more lives.

Question 15

All these euphemisms do not add respect to the Nuffield Council. What they do is reveal its hidden agenda to commodify the body. At least you could be honest and ask straightforwardly 'is it ok to turn the human body into a commodity for whatever purposes?'

Question 16

1. All material incentives are unacceptable, as far as I am concerned. This is regardless of their effectiveness. 2. Commodification of the body within or outside

the family is still commodification.

Question 17

Any material incentive would make me refuse to provide material or participate in a trial, that is unless I was in desperate need of the money (financial distress), or if the incentive could make me rich (commodity fetishism). Both cases presuppose and imply that I am a victim of certain social circumstances. Free people don't sell their bodies! People who sell their bodies could not have been free!

Question 18

No difference whatsoever. They are merely different commodities exchanged for a certain commodity (the organ). Dear Nuffield Council, can I ask you something? Is there a difference between indirect 'compensation' (e.g. a meal) and direct financial 'compensation' as far as a Thai prostitute is concerned?

Question 19

Yes, there is a difference. The former removes disincentives to donation. The latter incentivises. The former is not just acceptable, it reflects a responsible society. The latter is not acceptable to me. It reflects a disintegrating society.

Question 20

Yes I am aware of such developments: 1.Reduce morbidity. This requires a fundamental change in production and consumption. 2. Reduce social inequalities and fight poverty; this will increase social cohesion, trust, solidarity, empathy, and altruism - and thus the rate of donations. 3. Increase the trustworthiness of the medical profession and the NHS. Let people know that everything they are doing is really for the benefit of the people. This requires a fundamental change.

Question 21

Any coercion should render consent invalid. If free people don't sell their bodies, then people who do are not free.

Question 22

It cannot be distinguished (See Nancy Scheper Hughes on 'Sacrificial violence')! Therefore - allow deceased donations only! And, of course, reduce the demand.

Question 23

Absolutely not. Blank/abstract/vague consent is a mock. Either you respect the person's autonomy or you don't.

Question 24

No, both a decision one makes for oneself as well as a decision one makes for someone else reflect one's own interests. That said, one's own interests are shaped by circumstances upon which one not always has any influence. The

question should therefore focus on the nature of the circumstances that shape our interests.

Question 25

They should have the right in every case, including veto.

Question 26

To the family only. In an ideal society, and only there, they would belong to society.

Question 27

God no!

Question 28

A truly fair way of sharing the proceeds would mean no profit for the company. In other words, no private company should be allowed to appropriate individual or social objects.

Question 29

Total control, regardless of the nature or purpose. Why on earth less than total control?

Question 30

I get the impression that Nuffield Council wants to check whether the public would be willing to accept a market in body parts. I find this despicable.