

Part One: Case Analysis

Question 1:

Summary of the case

My chosen case study is “Medical Care for Prisoners, Take Three: Organ Transplant for Death Row Inmate”. This case highlighted Horacio Alberto Reyes-Camarena, who was suffering from kidney failure. Due to his health condition, he was receiving dialysis treatment three times a week in the correctional home. Hence, his dialysis costs are about \$120,000 a year, which is paid by the government (Pierce, 2014). Doctors think that he could get a kidney transplant because he fits the medical requirements. Many people believe that the person was found guilty of murder to get priority for a scarce organ. It causes an ethical problem because many law-abiding people are also waiting for organ transplants.

The people and events behind the case

Reyes-Camarena was sentenced to death in 1996 for the murder of an 18-year-old girl and a life-threatening stabbing of her sister. In prison, his kidney condition deteriorated, and he needed dialysis several times a week (Pierce, 2014). Hence, dialysis was very expensive, so he asked for a kidney transplant. This request created controversy among the public because many people felt it was unfair for a prisoner to get a scarce organ when many poor people could not.

Citation of my chosen case study

Pierce, J. (2014). *Morality play: Case studies in ethics*. Waveland Press. I chose “Medical Care for Prisoners, Take Three: Organ Transplant for Death Row Inmate” case study from this book.

Question 2:**Ethical issues of the case****Key members:**

The important people connected to this specific case are Horacio Alberto Reyes Camarena, who was suffering from kidney failure. The Oregon prison system has the job of taking care of its medical requirements. The public disagrees that he should get a kidney transplant. UNOS is the organization that makes the rules for how organs are shared.

Significance of the case

This case is important because it makes us think about tough ethical problems about fairness and the right to medical care. It challenges society to decide whether prisoners, particularly those who committed serious crimes, should receive the same medical treatment as others. It shows that there are not enough organs for everyone, so it created a controversy to give a scarce organ to a criminal is a right or wrong decision (Pierce, 2014). The case agrees with the idea that medical treatments should depend on someone's needs and whether they will help them, not on personal judgment about someone's past actions.

Question 3: The principles from your chosen ethical framework

The justice framework applies strongly to this case because it highlights that everyone has equal access to healthcare. The AMA's rule for doctors stated that each person getting medical care should receive the same level of attention, and choices about how to treat them should not be based on personal feelings or the way society views their past (AMA, 2025).

Fairness requires that there are not enough organs for transplant. Prioritization is based on patients' health needs instead of other people's opinions. Medical professionals must prioritize the patient, and doctors must treat everyone with respect.

Question 4: The Explanation of how the ethical framework can be used to examine the ethical issues of the case

The ethical framework helps look at the tough moral questions in this case by focusing on making sure everyone can get equal service. We can use it to see if saying no to a prisoner's transplant is based on real medical reasons or just opinions about what they did. When using this way of thinking, the main thing to think about is treating everyone the same, not if they are good or bad people (Penzer, 2024). The AMA rules agree with this idea by telling doctors to separate medical choices from punishments, so every patient is treated with respect. This shows that choices should be based on medical requirements for the patient, not public opinion.

Question 5: Explanation of how my chosen professional code of ethics applies to my case

The AMA Code of Medical Ethics applies directly to this case because it states that doctors are to provide equal treatment to all their patients. These rules stated that medical treatments should not be used as punishment and must depend on the health requirements of the patient (Code-medical-ethics, 2025). For Reyes-Camarena, healthcare workers must decide if he can get a kidney transplant based on his health, without thinking about his past crimes and other people's opinions. The AMA's moral rules also stated that it is important to respect everyone. It makes sure everyone can fairly get important healthcare.

Question 6: Possible solutions to the case

One solution is to work to specific medical standards for organ transplants. It ensures that Reyes-Camarena is assessed in the same manner as any other patient. This ensures that judgments are fair and focused on health requirements. Another option is for the state to establish clear standards regarding medical care for prisoners, so that incidents like these are addressed consistently. Public worries can also be addressed by increasing information about how organ allocation works. These approaches help to maintain a balance between ethical obligation and the public's need for trust in the healthcare system.

Question 7: Strengths and limitations of each solution

Criteria	Strengths	Limitations
Using strict medical criteria for transplant decisions	• It ensures fairness because decisions are based only on the patient's health requirements. • It prevents discrimination against prisoners or other groups. • It protects doctors from making a decision.	• People may still feel emotionally unfair. • It does not address the shortage of scarce organs.
Creating clear policies for inmate medical care	• It promotes consistency in the way cases are handled. • It reduces confusion for medical staff and the public. • It helps to build trust in the system.	• The policies may take time to develop. • Not everyone will agree with the rules once created.
Improving transparency in organ allocation	• It helps the public understand the way decisions are made. • It reduces	• Some people may still disagree even after understanding the process.

	misinformation. ● It increases trust in the organ transplantation process.	
Increasing organ donation efforts	● It reduces competition for scarce organs. ● It helps to save more lives.	● Some cultural and personal beliefs make donation difficult for many people.

Question 8: Recommended solution and justifiable recommendation

The most ethical way is to adopt specific medical criteria for transplant decisions; it is essential to treat Reyes-Camarena similarly to any other patient. This option is the most ethical since it respects the values of justice and equal access to healthcare. It assures that judgments are made on only the basis of medical necessity rather than personal judgment regarding the crime. This method is also based on the AMA Code of Medical Ethics, which specifies that medical care cannot be used for punishment (AMA, 2025). By focusing on health criteria, healthcare professionals protect patient dignity while also maintaining a fair medical system.

Question 9: Ethical implications of the recommended solution

The ethical implications of applying specific medical criteria to transplant decisions are based on trust in healthcare. This method emphasizes the concept that every patient, including criminals, has the same ethical value. They should not be refused life-saving care due to previous crimes. It ensures that during providing care, no punishment is given by the staff, and no discrimination occurs. It also increases public trust in the medical system because judgments are

made based on the actual situation rather than emotion. It may cause hurt for those who are ethically divided, demonstrating the tension between justice and public opinion.

Part Two: Reflection

Question 1:

A. The difficult choices I had to make

This case involved balancing fairness and providing equal healthcare access. One challenging decision was to separate personal feelings about the prisoner's crime from the medical issue of whether he needed similar treatment. Another problem was determining how much emphasis to give to public opinion over professional ethical norms.

B. Your moral intuition of the case

My moral sense was initially conflicted since donating a precious kidney to someone on death row seemed emotionally unfair. After reviewing ethical ideals such as justice and respect for others, my instincts changed. I realized that medical decisions must be neutral. It should be focused on the patient's needs, not public opinion.

Question 2:

How my personal ethics guided my conclusion

My personal ethics guided my conclusion by emphasizing equal treatment for all patients. These values aligned closely with the Justice Framework. The concept of non-discrimination also inspired me to support judgments based on medical requirements, not on his crime.

If I had chosen a different framework, utilitarianism, the outcome could have been different. Under utilitarian thinking, I might have the larger good and suggest donating the organ to someone with more years to live or someone deemed more “socially valuable. This may have resulted in denying the prisoner a transplant. My personal beliefs are aligned with justice and respect for people; I always preferred fair treatment for all.

Question 3: Alignment of the Professional Code of Ethics with my values

The AMA Code of Medical Ethics aligns closely with my personal values, where I prioritize that everyone can get equal medical treatment. I believe that everyone deserves respect. The code reflects this by requiring doctors to treat all patients equally. I also respect honesty and consistency, which the code supports by outlining clear principles for medical decision-making. The guideline that care should never be used as punishment corresponds to my idea that healthcare must remain free of judgment. These shared ideals allowed me to approach the case in a balanced and ethical manner.

Question 4: Importance of this Code of Ethics in Society

The AMA Code is important in society because it protects patients and promotes confidence in the healthcare system. It encourages healthcare staff to base their decisions on medical needs rather than personal preferences. This ensures fair treatment for everyone, particularly marginalized groups. The code also serves to avoid discrimination and promote patient safety by establishing professional standards. By setting clear expectations, it increases public trust in medical care. This is essential for a healthy society.

Reference List

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