

AOHS

Global Health

Unit 2, Lesson 5

Distribution of Scarce Resources

Many medical resources are in limited supply

- There are more than 122,000 people in the United States waiting for an organ donation.
- In some countries there is a scarcity of blood for transfusions. The blood must be the right type and must be screened for disease.
- Often, governments and NGOs have limited amounts of money to buy supplies and improve health infrastructure.

There are four guiding principles for the distribution of scarce resources

Global health workers take the following principles into consideration when they make decisions about how to use resources:

***Health
maximization***

***Priority to the
worst off***

Equality

***Personal
responsibility***

Health maximization means getting the biggest bang for your buck

You are part of a team working to reduce malaria in Mozambique. With your budget, you can:



OR
?



- Buy enough drugs to treat 50 people with malaria
- Buy mosquito nets that prevent malaria for 200 families

Which would you choose? Can you think of any problems with using the principle of health maximization?

Priority to the worst off means helping the people in greatest need

Tokyo is one of the world's largest cities. When the earthquake and tsunami struck in March 2011, buildings in Tokyo collapsed. Would you...



Help in Tokyo
because there are so
many people

OR
?



Help smaller towns
in the path of the
tsunami

Can you think of any problems with using priority to the worst off to make decisions about distributing resources?

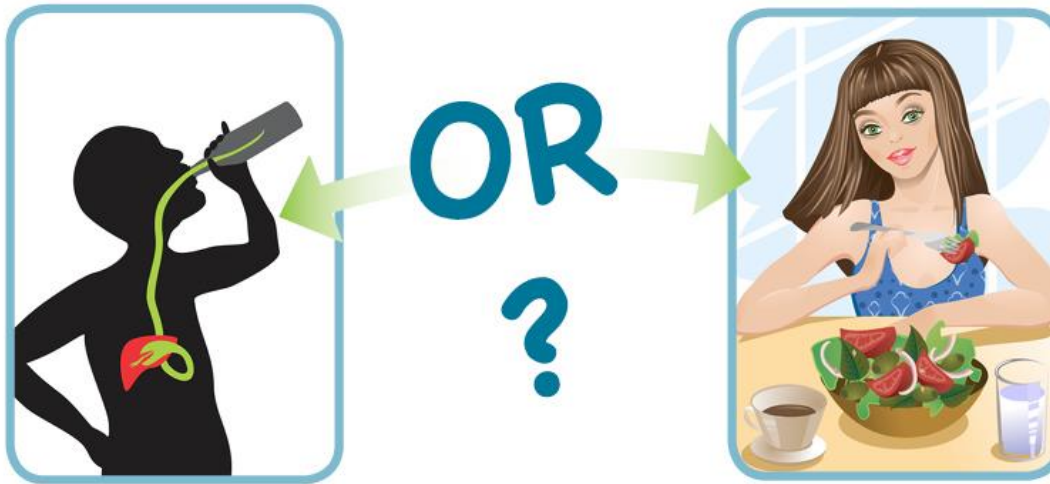
Equality means everyone should have the same chance to get help

- This principle means that whether a patient is rich or poor, severely ill or mildly ill, he or she has the same chance for treatment as anyone else.
- This is especially important in countries where women or minority groups are discriminated against.



Personal responsibility means people need to take care of their own health

Who should have priority to receive a donated liver?



An alcoholic who ruined his liver through heavy drinking but now has quit drinking

A woman with a hereditary liver disease who eats healthy, exercises, and takes care of herself

Which would you choose? Can you think of any problems with using the principle of personal responsibility?

Distributing resources requires careful consideration

All four principles must be considered when determining how to distribute resources:

***Health
maximization***

***Priority to
the worst off***

Equality

***Personal
responsibility***