Reviewer’s report

Title: The Reuse of Cardiac Organs in Transplantation: An Ethical Analysis

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Reviewer: David Rodriguez-Arias

Reviewer's report:

The paper addresses an interesting and conceptually juicy topic, despite the extremely low incidence of cardiac retransplantation.

However:

1. The paper needs better structure: concerns about inheritance and concerns about consent are similar in my view. Consent-related issues are well discussed in the paper. A suggestion would be to clearly differentiate concerns about consent of the First Donor, and concerns about the second recipients consent to receive a reused organ. Besides, the authors overlook an important and specific question related to the reuse of organs. This becomes especially problematic in this paper, as the authors take very seriously the intention of FD, suggesting that First Donors may have moral, legal and property claims on the use and reuse of their hearts. That question is: Should the first recipient have a right to refuse to donate their transplanted heart after death? (given the assumption that they are not the owners)?

2. The paper mixes ethical and policy issues: that some people may believe that there may be identity issues related to retransplantation of an organ does not make it an ethically relevant topic to be discussed. As an analogy: If people thought that God would be angry if I accept a second-hand heart (a belief that is equally unsupported by data), would you include this as an ethical issue? The concern that personal identity may be threaten by transplantation has never been supported by empirical data. Of course, that does not make the concern politically negligible, but it remains ethically trivial.
3. It takes for granted, without much discussion, that directed deceased donation is a position that should be taken seriously. This leads to the assumption that the authors "need to explore the possibility of developing a distinct theory, rather than adopting the conventional ones". That "a considerable number of people in our society might desire to honor the intention of FD as much as possible in the setting of RCOT" does not count as sufficient to elaborate an alternative theory of inheritance, perhaps.

4. Despite the prominent role families have in OD in Japan, involving that dimension in the analysis creates more confusion than clarity.

5. The whole section on recycling is expendable: why re-using an organ involves a higher challenge to respect than it first use? Isn't organ transplantation a form of recycling itself?

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.
Unable to assess

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**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
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No

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