Opt-out Donation &

The Ethics of Organ Retrieval

Prof. Martin Wilkinson
The University of Auckland, New Zealand

Date: 3 October 2017 (Tuesday)
Time: 4:30 – 6:00 p.m.
Venue: Lecture Theatre 7, 2/F, Yasumoto International Academic Park,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin
(5 mins walk from the University MTR Station)
Registration: https://www.med.cuhk.edu.hk/registration/view.php?id=320165
All are welcome / Free Admission

Abstract
Organs for transplant are in short supply. Some people think an opt out system of consent would make more organs available. Critics argue that an opt out system would unethically fail to respect the deceased. But the debate about opt out consent is a tissue of confusion. This talk tries to clear things up (1) by pointing out the relatively insignificant role of consent in affecting the supply of organs and (2) by showing that most of the opt in/opt out debate is irrelevant because no countries require the deceased's consent. The practical controversy is about the role of the family and here the consent differences between actual systems are small. As for the ethics of consent, this talk will assess the claims of the deceased and their families and show how they do and do not relate to consent. The conclusion will be that opt out systems are ethically defensible in certain conditions, but the most that is likely to be justified would be ‘soft’ opt out where the deceased's consent is not necessary but the family have the power to veto retrieval - a position not very different from so-called ‘opt in’ systems today.

Biography
Martin Wilkinson is Professor of Politics at the University of Auckland. He is the author of ‘Ethics and the Acquisition of Organs’ (Oxford UP 2011). He has been Chair of New Zealand's Bioethics Council and Deputy Chair of its National Ethics Advisory Committee.

Enquiries: CUHK Centre for Bioethics/ wanglauree@cuhk.edu.hk/ (852) 3943-9467