

Preface

The extent of the global organ shortage is horrifying. Tens of thousands of patients die every year around the world due to the shortage of organs. Even the “lucky ones” may languish on waiting lists for years until an organ is made available to them. Moreover, due to the shortage, a global black market for organs—mainly kidneys—has developed, and it has been rightly criticized for unfairness and even exploitation. In the course of our work, we have arrived at the conviction that the dire situation that patients in need of an organ are facing is—not exclusively but overwhelmingly—the consequence of the primary element of organ procurement systems implemented practically all over the world: exclusive reliance on uncompensated donation. Our main motivation in writing this book is to contribute to a change in the current organ procurement policy.

We have, however, a private motive, and, to us, it is ultimately the most compelling. David Kaserman, one of the authors, responded to the profound challenge that his congenital kidney disease presented in a manner that many would be unable to imitate: he applied his training as an economist to his predicament as an organ transplant patient, and he concluded that the medical misery in which he found himself had an *economic* cause. David Kaserman made several significant contributions to economics, especially in the areas of vertical integration, competitive market analysis, and regulation, but he felt more engaged by his work on the organ shortage than on any other topic. As his health deteriorated (partially as a consequence of the long-term use of drugs designed to block rejection of his transplant), his focus on the organ shortage became stronger, and he was actively engaged in work on this book at the time of his death. Our decision to complete this project is our way of honoring his memory.

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