

*Doctor Stephanie is in charge of the only emergency room for 500 miles. Any decision she makes will be obeyed, and no one will make any decisions without her. The emergency room only has room to treat 10 patients. There was a massive car accident, and 20 patients need emergency attention or they will die. Some are more likely to survive if treated than others, and Stephanie can definitely tell how likely each is to survive if treated. Let's call the 10 who are most likely to survive if treated "the top 10."*

1. Stephanie decides to treat only the top 10. Is this permissible? Is this obligatory?
2. In this version of the case, 5 of the patients got into the accident because they were taking medicine Stephanie prescribed and didn't swerve in time to avoid the wrecks that had already occurred. Further, she had previously forgotten to warn them that the medicine could make it difficult to avoid car accidents. Their collision with the already wrecked cars did not make anyone else's injuries worse. The 5 patients have a decent chance of surviving if they are given treatment, but none of them are in the top 10. Is it permissible for Stephanie to not treat any/all of these 5 patients? Would it be permissible for her to treat some or all of them rather than 5 patients in the top 10?
3. In this version of the case, there were two accidents, rather than one. Each accident involved 10 people, so there are still 20 people dying. One accident occurred much earlier in the day, and those people are currently admitted and receiving treatment; all are in critical condition and are being kept alive by machines. These patients might survive, but the 10 people in the second accident are all more likely to survive (the patients from the second accident are all in the top 10). Would it be permissible to stop treating the patients who are currently receiving treatment, so that they die, in order to treat the patients from the second accident? Is it obligatory to do so?
4. This is like case 3, except that the patients already admitted are not being kept alive by machines. They all require future medical treatment and hospitalization in order to survive, but if Stephanie stops them from being treated now, they will all survive until all of the patients in the second accident die. Further, they will refuse to leave their hospital beds. The only way to treat the patients from the second accident, who are all much more likely to survive if treated, is to kill the patients from the first accident. Would this be permissible?
5. This is like case 1, with one difference. For all of the patients *not* in the top 10, the reason they have a lower chance of survival is because they have systematically received worse health care in the past due to racial discrimination. Stephanie knows this. Would it be permissible for Stephanie to treat only the patients in the top 10?