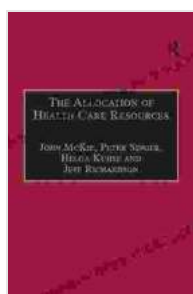


# An Ethical Evaluation of the QALY Approach in Medico-Legal Series

The Quality-Adjusted Life Year (QALY) approach is a method of evaluating health care interventions that combines quality of life with life expectancy. It is increasingly used in medico-legal settings to assess the value of medical negligence claims and to allocate resources for health care. However, the QALY approach has also been the subject of ethical criticism.



## The Allocation of Health Care Resources: An Ethical Evaluation of the 'QALY' Approach (Medico-Legal Series)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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This article provides an ethical evaluation of the QALY approach. It begins by outlining the strengths and weaknesses of the QALY approach. It then considers the ethical principles that should guide the use of the QALY approach in medico-legal settings. Finally, the article offers suggestions for the ethical use of the QALY approach.

## Strengths and Weaknesses of the QALY Approach

The QALY approach has a number of strengths. First, it is a comprehensive measure of health that takes into account both quality of life and life expectancy. Second, it is a quantitative measure that allows for comparisons between different health care interventions. Third, it is a relatively simple measure to calculate.

However, the QALY approach also has a number of weaknesses. First, it is based on a utilitarian ethical framework that values the maximization of overall happiness. This framework may not be appropriate in all cases, particularly in cases where individual rights are at stake. Second, the QALY approach is based on a number of assumptions that may not always be valid. For example, it assumes that all life years are of equal value and that quality of life can be measured accurately.

Third, the QALY approach can be difficult to apply in medico-legal settings. This is because it requires a detailed understanding of the claimant's quality of life and life expectancy. In some cases, this information may not be available or it may be difficult to interpret.

## **Ethical Principles for the Use of the QALY Approach in Medico-Legal Series**

The QALY approach should be used in medico-legal settings in a way that is consistent with the following ethical principles:

- **Respect for autonomy:** The claimant's autonomy should be respected by ensuring that they are fully informed about the QALY approach and its implications. They should also be given the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process.

- **Beneficence:** The QALY approach should be used in a way that promotes the claimant's well-being. This means that it should be used to improve the claimant's quality of life and life expectancy.
- **Non-maleficence:** The QALY approach should not be used in a way that harms the claimant. This means that it should not be used to justify denying the claimant medical care or other benefits.
- **Justice:** The QALY approach should be used in a way that is fair and just. This means that it should not be used to discriminate against certain groups of people, such as people with disabilities or mental illness.

## **Suggestions for the Ethical Use of the QALY Approach**

The following suggestions are offered for the ethical use of the QALY approach in medico-legal settings:

- **Use the QALY approach in conjunction with other methods of evaluation:** The QALY approach should not be used as the only method of evaluating health care interventions in medico-legal settings. It should be used in conjunction with other methods of evaluation, such as cost-effectiveness analysis and patient-reported outcomes.
- **Be transparent about the limitations of the QALY approach:** The limitations of the QALY approach should be made clear to claimants and other stakeholders. This includes the fact that the QALY approach is based on a utilitarian ethical framework, that it is based on a number of assumptions that may not always be valid, and that it can be difficult to apply in medico-legal settings.

- **Involve claimants in the decision-making process:** Claimants should be given the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process about how the QALY approach will be used. This includes the opportunity to provide input on the values that will be used to calculate the QALY score.
- **Use the QALY approach in a way that is fair and just:** The QALY approach should not be used to discriminate against certain groups of people, such as people with disabilities or mental illness. It should be used in a way that promotes the well-being of all claimants.

The QALY approach is a valuable tool for evaluating health care interventions in medico-legal settings. However, it is important to use the QALY approach in an ethical manner. This means that the QALY approach should be used in conjunction with other methods of evaluation, that the limitations of the QALY approach should be made clear to claimants and other stakeholders, that claimants should be involved in the decision-making process, and that the QALY approach should be used in a way that is fair and just.

By following these ethical guidelines, we can ensure that the QALY approach is used in a way that promotes the well-being of all claimants.

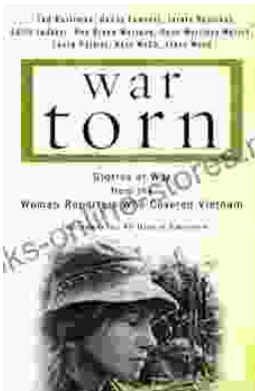


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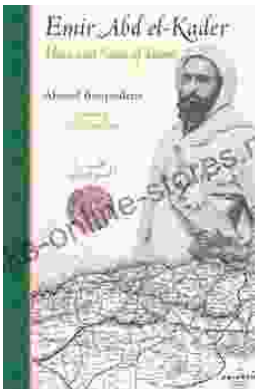
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