

HNC @ HOME

2026



A Level Economics *Activity 1*

Useful key terms:

- Economic problem – unlimited wants and needs BUT limited resources.
- Opportunity cost – the next best alternative which is lost when a choice is made.

This activity is designed to help you consider how you would solve a potential economic problem, but to also appreciate the consequences of decisions made.

Scenario:



A hospital only has one kidney dialysis machine. This machine is essential for people who no longer have functioning kidneys. Without access to this machine, these people would unfortunately die. The dialysis machine can only be used for a maximum of 30 hours per week because time is needed to re-set the machine between patients. Below shows all of the patients who require access to this machine:

Patient	Patient information
A	6 year old child who needs 10 hours per week. They are awaiting a kidney transplant which is expected to occur within the next year.
B	55 year old man who needs 5 hours per week. He is married with grown up children.
C	3 year old child who will need dialysis indefinitely. Currently needs 4 hours per week.
D	78 year old female, 4 hours per week.
E	7 year old child, has no brothers or sisters. Needs 4 hours per week
F	8 year old child, no brothers or sisters. 5 hours per week.
G	30 year old female, 2 young children. Needs 6 hours per week
H	30 year old male, no children, 4 hours per week
I	30 year old male, 2 young children, 5 hours per week.

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J	45 year old man with no children. Needs 6 hours per week but has a brother who would donate a kidney. This will take place in 6 months time and will mean that he will no longer need dialysis.
K	65 year old man who requires 10 hours per week. This patient is quite wealthy, so has promised to buy the hospital a second machine if he is still alive in a year's time.

Questions:

1. Identify and explain which patients you would provide access to the dialysis machine (remember that to efficiency is important - 30 hours should be used per week).
2. Which patients would you be least likely to provide dialysis machine access to? Explain your reasonings.
3. Produce a criteria list to decide how best to allocate

Criteria	Explanation
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

4. Explain how this scenario provides a good example of the economic problem and opportunity cost.

Extension task: what other economic problems can you identify?