

Difficult Decision-Making Dilemmas in Disasters: *The Ethics of Triage in Terrorist Attacks*



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The origin of Triage: Napoleonic wars

Baron Larrey

Battle of EYLAU 9. 2 . 1807

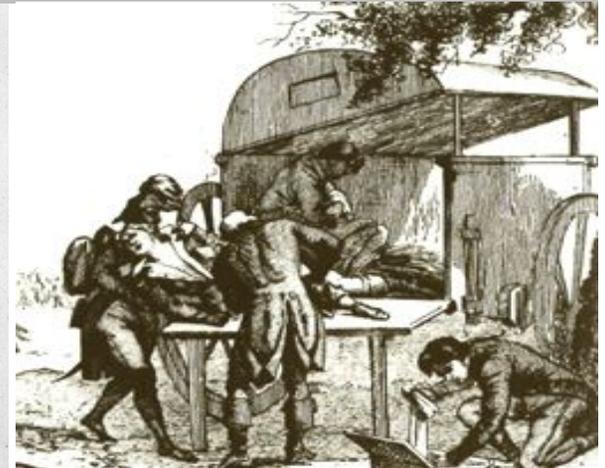
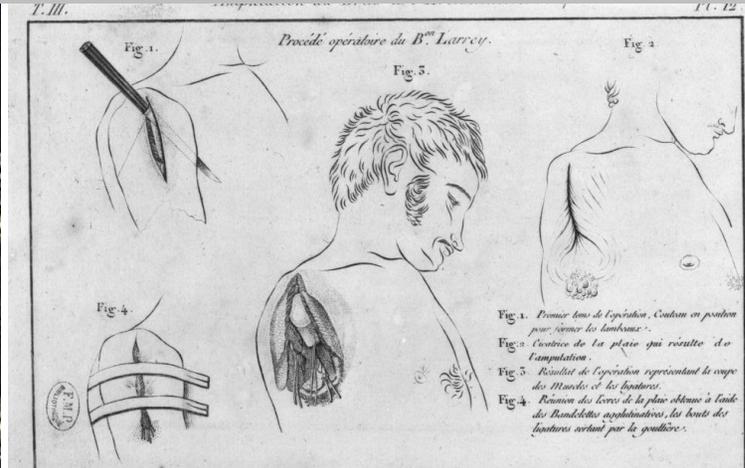


“ We will always start with the most dangerously injured, regardless of rank and distinctions ”

Worst first : A revolutionary concept !



Triage : Field rescue amputation of the arm in 3 minutes



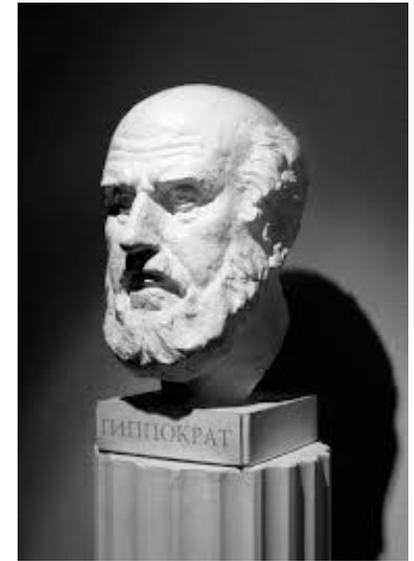
**Concept used in all the modern wars
and adapted to civilian practice**



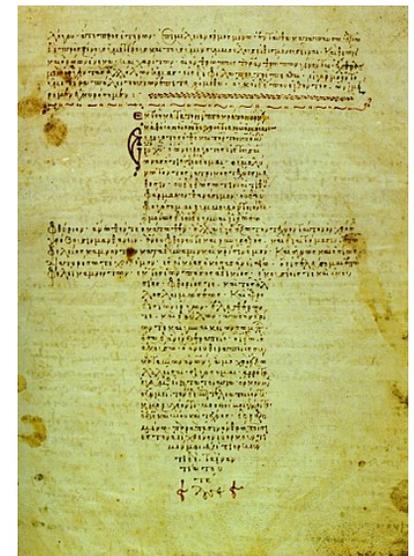
The Ethical basis of Triage

Hick JL, Ann Emerg Med. 2012;59 :177-87.

- **Fairness:**
 - The same process for individuals with equal needs
- **Duty to care:**
 - the best care as possible
- **Duty to steward resources**
 - The best outcome for the greatest number with available resources
- **Transparency**
 - The criteria are known and shared
- **Consistency**
 - The process is applied in the same way to all victims
- **Proportionality**
 - The standard of crisis care is adapted to the increased demand
- **Accountability**
 - The decisions can be justified and explained



Hippocrates



Le premier polar écrit en français et en alsacien

François Hollande décrète l'état d'urgence et ferme les frontières

L'ALSACE

www.alsace.fr

L'EST RÉPUBLICAIN

En guerre

LYON Poignardé pour des cigarettes: un suspect arrêté

JUSTICE avec Benzema: ami ou maître chanteur

MAC DOUGLAS

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Carnage à Paris: la

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La France en état d'urgence

fermées

Nuit d'horreur à Paris

Les journées de la malade française ne dépassent pas les 10 jours

positif

les X^e et XI^e arrondissements, explosions au stade de France

DNA

DERNIÈRES NOUVELLES D'ALSACE

FUSILLADES, EXPLOSIONS, PRISE D'OTAGES À PARIS HIÉR SOIR

L'horreur

le journal

DE SAÔNE-ET-LOIRE

PLUS DE 100 MORTS DANS LA CAPITALE

L'horreur à Paris

Le républicain Lorrain

Carnage à Paris

Paris attaqué

Paris November 2015

Time of terror

After these attacks the issue of terrorist care on scene was discussed

BFMTV
NEWS 24/7

DIRECT 22:34

ALERTE INFO

Triage and terrorism

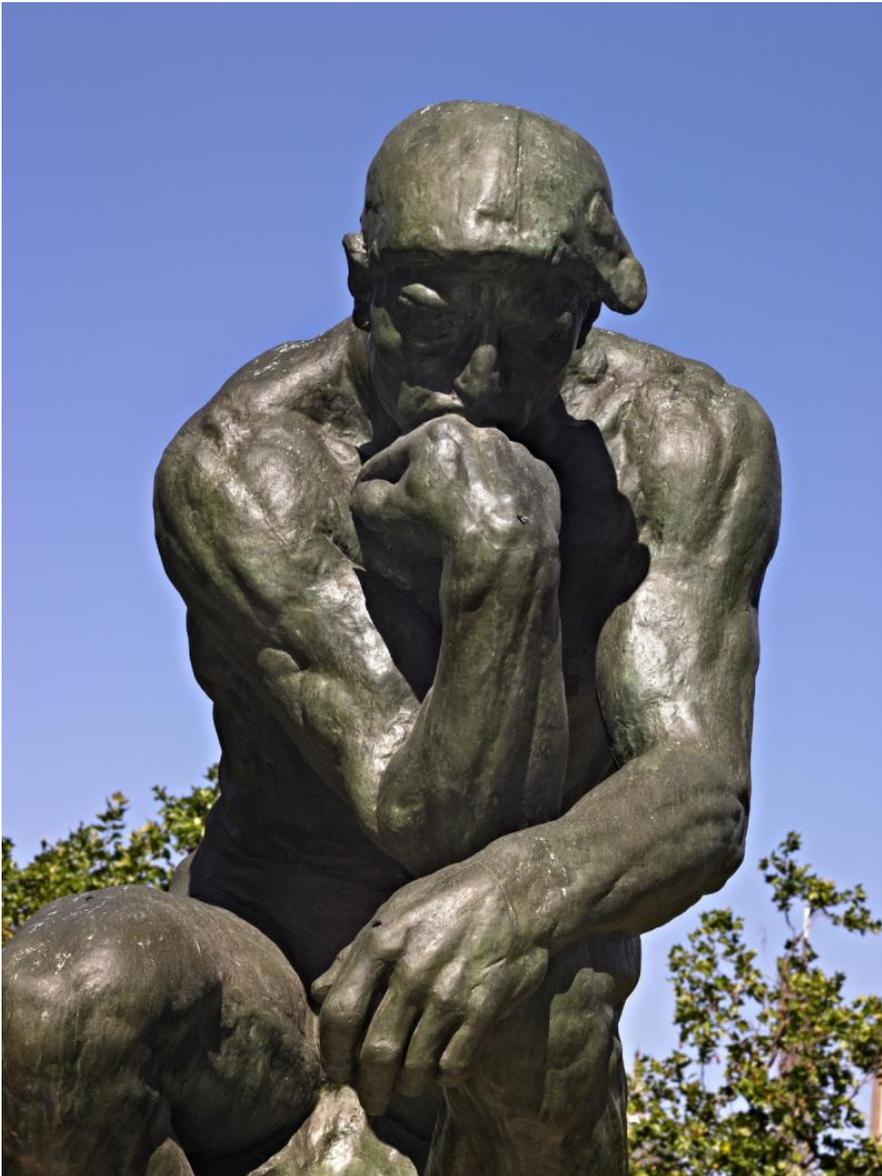
PAPER

Second thoughts about who is first: the medical triage of violent perpetrators and their victims

Azgad Gold,¹ Rael D Strous^{1,2}

ABSTRACT
Extreme intentional and deliberate violence against innocent people, including acts of terror and school shootings, poses various ethical challenges, some related to the triage of victims. The triage process is a dictionary becomes more specific: 'the assignment of degrees of urgency to wounds or illnesses to decide the order of treatment of a large number of patients or casualties'. This definition implicates

Triage and Terrorist Attack: Priority to Terrorist or Victim ?



- **“Classical” approach:**
the most serious first,
 - what can benefit terrorists instead of victims
- **"Just" approach:**
 - always the victim first

This has to be discussed before being on scene !

In favor of the terrorist

Gold A, Strous RD. J Med Ethics 2017;43:293–300

- The conventional view requires that the medical priority always be based solely on **strict medical parameters**
- Maintaining neutrality as a value is considered an essential element of medical triage: **No discrimination**

But just before the attacks everybody will agree that the terrorist must be neutralized (killed) and immediately after the attack he is transformed in a first priority for care ?

In favor of the victims: Justice

- **Retributive justice:** The terrorist does not deserve the right to a higher priority because he is responsible for the terror that imposes the use of triage
- **Distributive Justice:** The societal merit of the victims is higher making them eligible for higher prioritization
- **Corrective Justice:** The terrorist, who intentionally caused the injury of the victims is of lower priority than the victims

Gold A, Strous RD. J Med Ethics 2017;43:293–300

Translational ethics applied to terrorists

Gold A, Strous RD. J Med Ethics 2017;43:293–300

Cribb A , J Med Ethics 2010;36:207

- Ethics is not immutable !
- In certain specific situations, a translational evolution of the ethics , the "victim first" approach, may be considered as a legitimate alternative to the classic triage policy
- However terrorists should always be treated as an act of humanism and with good medical practice.

On scene

from a pragmatic point of view

- In a terrorist attack, it can be very difficult to precisely identify victims and aggressors
- **Care is the priority** : The rescue teams do not have time for an emergency “investigation”
- Team must have been prepared to take ethical decisions
- On scene ethical reasoning must remain practical

On scene

from a practical point of view

- The conventional approach is the reference
- The translational approach is limited to special circumstances for example:
 - When the inadequacy of care resources is temporarily extreme (CBRN attack) and the aggressor is identified without any doubt
 - When Emergency Teams had to put their lives in danger to rescue a potential suicide bomber who is injured
 - When Terrorist are transported to a different facility as the victims, with the same quality of care but under constant Police surveillance
 - ...

Triage saving the life of a terrorist

- Is directly opposed to the objectives of terrorism (kamikaze) and it maintains the ethical values of society
- Is a proof of the strength of the system of care which is not disorganized by the terrorist attack
- It is also useful: Police investigation and prevention of other attacks

The best and the worst service to a terrorist ...

