

## What should happen to your brain after you die?

Edinburgh International Science Festival  
Royal College of Surgeons  
16 April 2010

### Evaluations Summary

#### 1. Participant information

##### I work in

Healthcare/science	26
Third sector organisation/charity	2
Public engagement/education	5
Other	8

##### Please specify

Private interest as an 80 year old who has/will donate body to St Andrews Uni

I am a school student S5

Retired librarian

Energy supply

Interested member of the public

Student

Undergraduate student

Retired former HEO, manager of biology lab and scientist in Edinburgh

[9 participants additionally described themselves as retired]

#### 2. Event overall

##### How would you rate this event overall?

Excellent	28
Good	13
Average	
Poor	

**Have your views on brain banking changed as a result of attending this event?**

Yes 17  
No 24

**Would you recommend this type of event to others?**

Yes 41  
No

**Are there any ways in which the event could have been improved?**

The opening questions could have been repeated at the end  
Some of the questions I felt were too general – e.g. ‘should people with degenerative brain disease be considered competent....’

A few more questions even perhaps but its not a criticism just a thought.  
Excellent run event.

Possibly more explanations on what a post mortem is – because this may influence people’s decisions on brain banking

The final questions were not clear, and in fact were confusing

Questions not focused enough, too ambiguous

Summary of important points arising from each groups be aired/written down

None. Pitched well and visual aids good, especially for the squeamish.  
Despite having worked in animal research, medicine is more fearsome and I had some trepidation about attending, but felt perfectly at ease in the atmosphere of the meeting

**3. Content**

**Quality of presentations**

Excellent 27  
Good 13  
Average 1  
Poor

### **Quality of facilitated discussions**

Excellent	24
Good	16
Average	1
Poor	

### **Appropriateness of topics covered**

Excellent	26
Good	15
Average	
Poor	

### **Timing of event**

Excellent	20
Good	19
Average	2
Poor	

### **Additional comments:**

The whole event was most impressive

Some Power Point presentations too 'wordy'

No 'counter brain donation' arguments from presenters

Am better informed and much more aware of alternate views

Wonderful thank you, the range of speakers and the presentations they gave was outstanding

Very thought provoking

Perhaps 'just how special is the brain' should be lead topic. General intro to the subject matter concerned useful. The Chair's introduction and handling of voting was grand

## 5. Organisation and venue

Excellent	37
Good	3
Average	
Poor	

### Catering

Excellent	23
Good	15
Average	1
Poor	

### Booking and pre-event information

Excellent	23
Good	13
Average	3
Poor	1

### Welcome and registration on the day

Excellent	18
Good	17
Average	4
Poor	2

### Additional comments:

A number of participants noted that the venue had been incorrectly advertised in some of the publicity materials produced by the Science Festival, and others noted that the toilets were inconveniently located

## 6. Future events

Do you have any suggestions for future events that you would like Gengage to carry out?

Not yet but more would be good

Maybe an event on legislation of gene patenting

Confidentiality of medical records vs access to records for research

A similar event with current issues of the day

Relate science and its social implications

**Are there any comments that you wished to make but did not get the chance to make today?**

No –it was possible to raise all of this within the group

Brain donation/other organ donation/transplant issues need to be clarified

Discussion time could have been longer as at every session it had to be stopped for talks to continue, but this would probably happen however long we had so I think the time was set about right

Superseding brain studies at biochemical, histological etc is the interest in behaviour and function

The question of involvement in animal research using human brain tissue, which would concern me if a donor

Just 'can the mind perhaps survive brain death? - implications

**7. General remarks**

Very insightful, many thanks

Good afternoon, loved interactive part!

The discussions in small groups were really useful, allowing us to examine issues which seemed straightforward at first but were actually more complicated e.g. if relatives should be allowed to know the results of investigations.

Generally very good and would encourage others to come.

I realised towards the end that my voting device wasn't always working – my fault but if I had been warned to check the display first this would have helped

Great

I learned so much. Many thanks

Very stimulating debate

I was, by the end, getting confused between transplant donation, brain donation, tissue donation for research, etc....

This was most stimulating and thought-provoking afternoon

An excellent event

The session raised some interesting issues. It is clearly important to gauge the public's feelings on these issues

I really like the voting too, that was very interesting  
Extremely good value

Enjoyed seminar very much

Enjoyed the afternoon very much, thank you

V. good – thank you

Intellectually stimulating

Need more input from sociology and legal implications to connect science to the role of science

Thank you for a stimulating and thought-provoking series of lectures with useful discussion sessions

Accompanied a friend, and not personally interested or partial in donating my brain or other organs to science (I suffered ill-health in Plant Mycology Research 1975-9 with gross exposure to allergenic spores/pulmonary hypersensitivity due to their poor greenhouse and lab containment facilities) Donors might need to know should they have reservations on animal research if all investigations using their brain material would be conducted in vitro (on the bench) and not in vivo using animal host. No doubt this could be made a distinction on their consent form. Overall impression, brain banks are essential p.s Having a childhood friend recently diagnosed with Alzheimer's your research is obviously imperative to an ageing society and Brain Banks vital. I wish you well.