

What is the Dublin Brain Bank and why is it necessary?

The aim of the Dublin Brain Bank is to provide Irish clinicians and researchers with access to brain tissue that can be used to study different disorders in the brain.

Donation of brain tissue to research is of fundamental importance as it allows us to examine the cause of neurological diseases and disorders which may lead to improvements in diagnosis and treatment for patients in the future.

Examination of brain tissue directly after death can also facilitate correct final diagnosis. This can be important in hereditary diseases, where there may be implications for family members.

By encouraging interested donors to make a post mortem brain donation, the Dublin brain bank offers individuals the chance to support medical science.

What is meant by brain tissue?

The whole brain is examined. The brain is a very complex structure and therefore it is necessary to look at all the different parts. In these case or neurological conditions involving the spinal cord, both brain and spinal cord are recovered for examination.

Is normal brain tissue needed?

Yes. Normal brain tissue allows comparison with the abnormal tissue, which allows researchers and clinicians to see what has gone wrong. A donation from an individual without a neurological or psychiatric illness (so-called 'control') is equally valuable for research, because every research project

requires control tissue for comparative purposes. We therefore gratefully welcome such donations and encourage unaffected spouses and family members to consider registering as donors of control tissue.

What is a post-mortem examination?

This is an orderly process, supervised by a neuropathologist, which allows recovery of the donated tissue. This should preferably be carried out within 24 hrs but can be delayed up to 72 hrs.

How will information obtained from a brain be of benefit to the family?

Occasionally post-mortem diagnoses are different to those made whilst the donor was alive. Furthermore, certain diagnoses can only be confirmed by post-mortem examination of the donor's brain. This is particularly important for those in whom the neurological disease may have a hereditary or familial association. If you or a close relative have such a disease, this programme may then be relevant for a child or grandchild who may be at risk of developing the disorder. Relatives of the donor are given the opportunity to discuss the results with a neuropathologist.

What happens to the brain tissue?

The brain tissue is processed in two ways to allow maximum information to be obtained and to ensure the tissue is of use for many years to come. Half of the tissue is frozen and stored for use in research. The remaining tissue is fixed in formalin to allow for neuropathological diagnosis and research.

Disposal of tissue

Brain tissue is usually kept for an indefinite period because donated tissue is of immense value for a number of studies carried out over time. Subsequently, tissue samples are disposed of in a lawful, respectful way following Human Tissue Legislation guidelines, unless the family/next of kin specifically wish to make their own arrangements.

Will post mortem delay a funeral?

As the post-mortem is usually carried out within 24-72 hrs after death funeral arrangements should not be delayed. The donor's body is usually released to the undertaker on the day of post-mortem

Will the body be disfigured?

No. After the post-mortem, mortuary technicians will prepare your relative's body so that open casket or other traditional funeral arrangements can be made.

What research is performed on the brain tissue?

Many conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, bi-polar disorder, motor neuron disease, Huntington's disease, schizophrenia, autism and other neurological and psychiatric conditions only affect humans. Brains from people affected are essential for research devoted to finding treatments and cures.

Further information on research activities and groups carrying out research using donated tissue can be found on the Brain Bank website www.rcsi.ie/brainbank

Does donation cost anything?

No. All costs relating to the transport for donation will be borne by Dublin Brain Bank.

Is donation confidential?

Yes. Donor details and consent will be entered onto a secure database. Confidentiality is maintained by coding all entries. Information will only be passed on to other health professionals, such as the GP, with the donor's consent. Data collected by the study will only be analysed by approved members of research groups working on neurodegenerative disorders. Once a donation has occurred the tissue is given a unique identification number and stored securely.

Can I become a donor if I live outside Dublin?

Yes. The Brain Bank works in conjunction with hospitals around the country so that tissue can be recovered and transferred within 24-72hrs.

How do I make preparation for a brain donation?

It is important to make the necessary arrangements well in advance so that family members have time to discuss this very important issue. This can be arranged by contacting our project coordinator on the number given below. You will receive the relevant consent and information forms along with instructions on how to fill them out so that all the necessary arrangements can be organised.

**Tel: 01 809 2706
01 797 4757**
Email: brainbank@rcsi.ie
**Mail: Ms. Jennifer Lorigan
Project Coordinator
Dublin Brain Bank
Dept. Neuropathology
Beaumont Hospital
Dublin 9
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Can I make a donation to the running of the Dublin Brain Bank?

Yes. All donations to the Brain Bank are greatly appreciated. If you would like to make a contribution please contact us on the number given above.

Information Pamphlet

www.rcsi.ie/brainbank

Secure the Future



Dedicated to the memory of Aileen Clarke