

# We need to beware of what follows the Liverpool Care Pathway

SIR – Although the Liverpool Care Pathway (LCP) has evidently become both discredited and discontinued, it is likely to resurface in due course but in a different form. There will probably be another tick-box of symptoms perceived to indicate a poor quality of life, reducing death to an algorithm or a flow diagram.

Historically, the LCP is nothing new. Years ago in the United States,

there was something called the Brain Death Train whereby transplantable organs were removed from brain-damaged patients who were neither consenting nor actually dying. Organ transplantation was thus the engine driving the brain-death train.

This growing demand for organs could well see a new version of the LCP emerging, with emphasis upon organ donation and the so-called “gift

of life”. The greater expectations upon medicine and nursing as the general population lives longer and grows older may add to re-defined alternatives to the LCP. Unless safeguards are in place, elderly people will be more vulnerable than ever.

Yours faithfully,  
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