

Locked-in father rejects marriage request

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When a 61-year-old man who had lost the use of every muscle to a neurological disease gained the ability to talk through the power of thought, there were only two disappointments.

The first was that he had to be asked each question several times and could answer only "yes" or "no". The second

came when his daughter's boyfriend asked for permission to marry her. He said no.

The patient was one of three with locked-in syndrome to benefit from a study that allowed patients to communicate via a device that measures oxygen in the brain.

Researchers at Wyss Center for Bio and Neuroengineering in Geneva hail-

ed their find, published in the online journal Plos Biology, as the first step towards the abolition of complete locked-in states.

The system is about 70 per cent accurate, which means that questions must be asked several times to be sure of the answer.

The response to the marriage request was "no" nine times, and "yes" once.

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