

# 'Body' harvesting

Sir, A failure to respect individuals and families by retaining organs without consent after the Alder Hey scandal resulted in the Human Tissue Act in 2004. We believe that the legislation requires reform, as the consent requirements do not apply to imported tissue. This loophole is being relied upon by a number of exhibitions that obtain bodies from countries with poor human rights records. In 2010, *The Lancet* called for reform of the UK law, and we are aware of at least three such exhibitions since.

Today there is a lecture entitled "Why donate your body to science?" at the exhibition of Chinese corpses, "Real Bodies", in Birmingham. Donation requires consent, ethically and morally. The US organiser, Imagination Exhibitions, has been unable to provide any evidence for consent for its commercial exhibition of cadavers. The organiser merely states that they are "unclaimed

bodies" obtained legally from Dalian, China. Other countries, such as Israel and France, prohibit commercial exhibitions of body parts imported without valid consent. It is time for the UK to follow suit. Such exhibitions denigrate both science and society and risk an even bigger scandal than Alder Hey.

DR DAVID NICHOLL, consultant neurologist, Birmingham; DR ADNAN SHARIF, secretary, Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting, & consultant nephrologist, Birmingham; LORD ALTON OF LIVERPOOL; PROFESSOR JO MARTIN, president, Royal College of Pathologists  
*Plus a further 53 names at [thetimes.co.uk/letters](http://thetimes.co.uk/letters)*

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## End-of-life care

Sir, Melanie Phillips's article (July 31) on the end-of-life issue reminds me of the death of my mother in 2001. She was 94 and had been admitted to hospital after a fall. Twice before she had stopped eating but was persuaded

to start again. This time she was so frail that the doctors called me in to ask whether she should be force-fed or put on a drip. Knowing that she really wanted to pass away quietly I said no and she died three days later, knowing that her end was nigh. Surely this was the right way to deal with the situation.

GORDON PIRIE  
London SW15

Sir, Dr J D Baines (letter, Aug 1) is quite right. Withdrawing fluids from dying patients is abhorrent, and reminiscent of the discredited Liverpool Care Pathway (or should that be the "no care" pathway?). Death from dehydration is even more unpleasant than death by starvation, and as a retired nurse I view this approach to our dying patients with dismay. Palliative care should not be allowed to go down this route.

SUSAN LIANG  
Morden, Surrey

*Times 2.8.2018*  
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