

Head transplants possible by 2030, say doctors

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It is either science fiction or a plot from a horror movie, but a neurosurgeon said head transplants could be possible by the year 2030. Transplant surgery has come on leaps and bounds in the last few decades. Organ transplants are commonplace and this past decade has seen

face transplants. The next decade could see whole heads being transplanted. Neurosurgeon Bruce Mathew explained why he believes this is possible. He was actually working with author Michael J Lee on a science fiction novel. He said: "Initially, our intention was just to brainstorm an idea and it seemed rather silly, but then I realised, it actually isn't. If you transplant the brain and spinal cord together, it's not impossible."

Doctor Matthew, 63, has performed over 10,000 operations. He claims that head transplants would only be possible if the head was accompanied by the whole of its spinal cord. Advancements in nerve and spinal cord surgery, robotics and stem cell transplants mean it could be possible to attach an entire spinal cord and head to another body before 2030. Dr Matthew continued: "The thought of keeping the spinal cord in one piece has always been totally daunting, but now with modern technology you can do most things." Matthew also believes that consciousness would also move with the head and spinal cord from one body to another. The technology could treat spinal cord injuries and diseases like muscular dystrophy.

Sources: thesun.co.uk / independent.co.uk / mirror.co.uk

Writing

It is totally wrong and dangerous to transplant a head. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

science / fiction / neurosurgeon / transplants / decade / author / intention / brainstorm / operations / spinal cord / robotics / body / technology / body / consciousness / diseases

True / False

- a) A neurosurgeon has written a new science fiction horror story. T / F
- b) People who need a head transplant must first leap and bound. T / F
- c) The doctor got the head transplant idea while working with an SF writer. T / F
- d) The doctor said the head can be transplanted without the spinal cord. T / F
- e) The neurosurgeon has performed more than 10,000 operations. T / F
- f) Robotics and stem cell technology could help with head transplants. T / F
- g) The doctor said head transplants were daunting. T / F
- h) The doctor said consciousness would not move with the head. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| 1. plot | a. understood |
| 2. come on | b. at first |
| 3. whole | c. formidable |
| 4. initially | d. entire |
| 5. realised | e. fasten |
| 6. performed | f. cure |
| 7. attach | g. storyline |
| 8. daunting | h. illnesses |
| 9. treat | i. advanced |
| 10. diseases | j. done |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of organ transplants?
- b) Do you prefer science fiction movies or horror movies?
- c) What do you think of head transplants?
- d) What are the ethical concerns regarding head transplants?
- e) What problems might occur with a head transplant?
- f) Do you think head transplants are like the Frankenstein story?
- g) Are there any parts of the body that cannot be transplanted?
- h) What questions would you ask someone having a head transplant?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. a plot from | a. believes this is possible |
| 2. surgery has come on leaps | b. technology |
| 3. Organ transplants are | c. with the head |
| 4. Mathew explained why he | d. commonplace |
| 5. spinal | e. daunting |
| 6. keeping the spinal cord | f. a horror movie |
| 7. totally | g. muscular dystrophy |
| 8. modern | h. and bounds |
| 9. consciousness would also move | i. cord |
| 10. diseases like | j. in one piece |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you know about the spinal cord?
- How would you feel if you woke up in a new body?
- Do you think a body could be made from 'spare parts' in the future?
- Would the head retain its memories?
- What three adjectives best describe this story?
- Are the neurosurgeons playing the role of God?
- What questions would you like to ask the neurosurgeon?

Spelling

- science ifcinot
- a nrougeoeusrn said head transplants could be possible
- transplants are aoecpmloncm
- Initially, our ottnnnei ...
- I eersidla, it actually isn't
- piasln cord
- performed over 10,000 ronoaispte
- ocdacpanime by the whole
- it could be possible to tacath
- totally ntuadgin
- cnnocussseois would also move
- diseases like uslacmru dystrophy

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. i	3. d	4. b	5. a
6. j	7. e	8. c	9. f	10. h

Role Play

Role A – World Peace

You think world peace is the most achievable thing by 2030. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is unachievable about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least achievable of these (and why): space travel, head transplants or language injections.

Role B – Space Travel

You think space travel is the most achievable thing by 2030. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is unachievable about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least achievable of these (and why): world peace, head transplants or language injections.

Role C – Head Transplants

You think head transplants are the most achievable thing by 2030. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is unachievable about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least achievable of these (and why): space travel, world peace or language injections.

Role D – Language Injections

You think language injections are the most achievable thing by 2030. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is unachievable about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least achievable of these (and why): space travel, head transplants or world peace.

Speaking – 2030

Rank these with your partner. Put the things most likely to happen by 2030 at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| • Head transplants | • World peace |
| • A carbon-neutral world | • Jet packs |
| • President Ivanka Trump | • Flying cars |
| • Language injections | • Space travel |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.