



Dear Colleague,

Many families in this country are sadly dealing with the loss of a loved one as a result of CTE (Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy). In most cases the families are totally unaware that the death is associated with CTE because it is a relatively new discovery in science and can only be clearly diagnosed post-mortem. The symptoms for CTE (irrational behavior, suicidality, drug addiction, and anger issues) also do not present themselves until many years or decades after the start of the disease. CTE is believed to be caused by repeated blows to the head or body. Contact sports, combat duty, and domestic abuse are believed to be the main factors contributing to the start of CTE in the brain. Many people have never heard of CTE. And because it is a progressive and degenerative disease that destroys the brain slowly, the symptoms of CTE may be linked to exposures long forgotten.

In your profession you are faced many times with families that are grieving over a suicide or drug over-dose and the negative implications and shock add to the horrible circumstance. You play a very vital role in many of the cases by being able to possibly give these families a medical reason for their loss. You play a vital role in giving the family much needed answers.

We are seeking brain donations for autopsy of people who played in collision type sports, had military combat duty, or were victims of domestic abuse. If you are presented with a case of suicide, drug over-dose, or reckless act, we are asking you to contact the next-of-kin about prior history that meet our inclusion criteria. There are no costs for this study and identification of donors is confidential. Autopsies of the brain may provide families with critical information they may never have considered and allow them to find understanding from the tragedy while furthering science.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are now funding brain banks at the Bedford VA Medical Center in Massachusetts under the direction of Dr. Ann McKee to acquire, process, and distribute brains of athletes and veterans at risk for or with a history of CTE, TBI, ALS, and PTSD. These are scientific endeavors to seek truth and help protect future generations.

We request that you reach out to the appropriate donation coordinator when you have a case that meets our current inclusion criteria (see below) for the studies. Additionally, we are always looking to expand our network of qualified individuals to help with donation procedures. If you are willing to help with cases in your area:

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Office: 617-414-1187
Email: PKIERNAN@bu.edu

Signed: McKee, Nowinski, Zegel

Below are summaries of the various brain donation programs, their respective inclusion criteria, and the appropriate contact person for each program:

VA-BU-SLI/CLF Brain Bank (NIH Funded)

The VA-BU-SLI/CLF Brain Bank collects and studies post-mortem brain and spinal cord tissue to better understand the effects of trauma on the human nervous system—specifically focused on Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE). The tissue along with the clinical information of the donor will help to better understand the pathology, etiology, and epidemiology of trauma related neurodegenerative disorders including CTE, TBI, and ALS.

INCLUSION CRITERIA	
1.	Men who played American football or ice hockey at the professional or Olympic level, or who played at the college, semi-professional or juniors levels for at least 2 years.
2.	Men who played a high-risk contact-sport, other than American football or ice hockey, at the professional or Olympic level
3.	Women who played a high-risk contact sport at the professional, Olympic, or college level
4.	Men or women who played a high-risk contact sport at the professional, Olympic, college or high school level who died before the age of 35
5.	Men or women who played a high-risk contact sport at the professional, Olympic, college or high school level who were diagnosed with ALS during life
6.	Men or women with a military history of combat exposure
7.	Women with a history of domestic abuse

EXCLUSION CRITERIA	
1.	Specimen with a post-mortem interval before fixation of greater than 72 hours
2.	Specimen that was embalmed following brain autopsy
3.	Specimen of less than one full hemisphere

For further information or to refer a case please contact:

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 24/7 Urgent Matters: 617-992-0615
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VA National PTSD Brain Bank (VA Funded)

The PTSD Brain Bank is a human tissue bank that collects, processes, stores and distributes research specimens for future scientific studies. The PTSD Brain Bank obtains neurologic tissue specimens from veterans who suffer from PTSD.

For further information or to refer a case please contact:

Office: 857-364-3877
 Office Toll free: 800-762-6609
 PAGER: 617-705-9577 (24/7)
 CELL PHONE: 857-214-0992 (24/7)