

Defining Death in a Technological World: Why Brain Death is Death

- 1.** Under the Uniform Determination of Death Act, death can be determined by
- (a) The irreversible cessation of the animating or vital principle of the body
 - (b) Either the irreversible cessation of circulatory and respiratory functions, or the irreversible cessation of all functions of the entire brain, including the brainstem
 - (c) Either the irreversible cessation of circulatory and respiratory functions, or the irreversible cessation of consciousness
 - (d) Only the irreversible cessation of circulatory and respiratory functions

Answer: (b)

- 2.** The 1981 President's Commission defined death as
- (a) the permanent cessation of the integrated functioning of the organism as a whole
 - (b) departure of the animating or vital principle
 - (c) irreversible loss of personhood
 - (d) irreversible loss of psychophysical integration

Answer: (a)

- 3.** According to D. Alan Shewmon, brain death is not death, because
- (a) The brain is not necessary for the a human organism to be integrated as a whole
 - (b) A high degree of somatic integration may remain in a brain dead body
 - (c) Artificially sustained brain-dead pregnant women are still alive
 - (d) All of the above

Answer: (d)

- 4.** The 2008 President's Council on Bioethics did which of the following:
- (a) Rejected total brain failure as a criterion for determining
 - (b) Accepted total brain failure as a criterion for determining death
 - (c) Accepted the irreversible loss of consciousness as a criterion for determining death
 - (d) Rejected any neurological criterion for determining death

Answer: (b)

- 5.** Lizza thinks that the "decapitation gambit" shows that
- (a) Defining human death is not a strictly biological matter
 - (b) Total brain failure is an acceptable criterion for determining human death
 - (c) Human death can be defined as the irreversible loss of the psychophysical integration of the human being
 - (d) All of the above

Answer: (d)

- 6.** Where does Lizza think one would continue to exist, if one's head with its consciousness were successfully transplanted to another body and one's original decapitated body were artificially sustained?
- (a) In both the transplanted head and the artificially sustained, decapitated body
 - (b) In the artificially sustained, decapitated body

(c) In the transplanted head

(d) In neither the transplanted head nor the artificially sustained, decapitated body

Answer: (c)

7. What is the “decapitation gambit” in support of the claim that brain death is death? How strong is this argument? Does it show that brain death is death? Why or why not?
8. Lizza argues that defining death for human beings is not a strictly biological matter but involves philosophical and ethical considerations that go beyond biology. Do you agree? Why or why not?