

Using human  
cadavers as crash  
test dummies  
philosophy essay



Using human cadavers as test dummies? Is it necessary or a waste? Many people are for, and many people are against using human cadavers as crash test dummies. Some reasons people are for using human cadavers as crash test dummies is because it is cost beneficial, they get the most accurate feedback from the crash, and utilitarianism. Some reasons people are against using human cadavers as crash test dummies is because the golden rule, religion, and people could be using the human cadavers for better reasons. Do the pros outweigh the cons? I'll let you be the judge of that.

The people that are for using human cadavers as crash test dummies have a good argument. They have strong points that gravitate toward them. One reason people are for using human cadavers as crash test dummies is because it is cost beneficial. Many families have problems paying for the funeral service; therefore they may not have one at all. The average price for a funeral today is seven thousand dollars, and that is on the lower end. So the question is why put yourself in a great deal of debt when the body can be used for a better cause? Some people also have a funeral service and still donate their body. This is still saving the family about four thousand dollars for the grave site, tombstone, etc. Using human cadavers as crash test dummies is also cost beneficial because the average test dummies cost at least ten thousand dollars. This is a cheap crash test dummy and isn't as high tech as some facilities would need. By donating a person's body to science they are saving the family and the facilities a lot of money and these people believe it is for a good cause.

Another reason people are for using human cadavers as crash test dummies is because they get the most accurate feedback. By using an actual human

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body it shows the automobile world what a real human can take. The people that work with the human cadavers use crushing force or speeds to see what our bodies can take. They also drop ball bearings on the skulls of the human cadavers and drop the bodies at different heights down an elevator shaft. Many people argue against this case and say that they can use one human cadaver to find the crushing force or speeds, then once they know use the crash test dummies. However, the people from this angle argue back that the real thing is always better than a stand-in and there's always going to be different things that can break different things. Therefore they would need more than just one human cadaver. Back when cars were first created they used to be very dangerous. At very low speeds the car crashes were many times fatal. By the use of human cadavers they have made cars safer so more people survive. Since testing with human cadavers, every year since nineteen eighty seven at least eight thousand and five hundred lives have been saved. The bringing up of seatbelts and airbags there was a need for human cadavers. They needed to test with human cadavers to see how much force we could take. The people that are for using cadavers argue that crash dummies are excellent, and should be used. However they aren't one hundred percent accurate because only the human insides can tell us how much they can take.

A third reason people are for using human cadavers as crash test dummies are because utilitarianism. Utilitarianism is the idea that the moral worth of an action is determined by its utility to bring happiness or meaning in others' lives. The people that believe this are strongly for donating your body to science after death. By doing this you are greatly affecting many peoples'

lives in a profound way, which increases your moral worth greatly. Every time someone donates their body to science a huge number of lives are saved by that one person. If they were not a hero before they died, that has made them one immensely. Eight thousand and five hundred lives are saved each year by people who have donated their body to science. By getting their body used as test dummies increases their worthiness a lot. It may not sound glamorous or appealing at all but if you think about the long run, how many people you are saving it is a good deed that I'm sure will be greatly appreciated by many. Besides, you're not using it anymore, why not let it be used for a good cause that makes you look good?

Many people that are against using human cadavers as crash test dummies argue that it is not respectful. However, the people managing the body are very respectful with what happens to it and how it is handled. One way they do this is by keeping the face covered up. By doing this it gives the cadaver a great deal of privacy. Through this process the identity of the person is not revealed at all. They use letters and numbers to identify the cadaver and no one knows who the person is. The process by which they go through is also not gory at all. In the book they number the cadaver as UM 006 as the identifier of the cadaver. The scientists are the most respectful they can be while still doing their job.

Although there are many points for positives of using human cadavers as crash test dummies there are still many people against the issue. These people have many reasons for this and believe it is not something that people should do with the donated bodies. There are many reasons why.

Some reasons are; the golden rule, their religion, and the fact that the bodies  
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could be used for something better. For this reason, human cadavers are a greatly discussed in the science world. There is a great debate between many.

One reason people are against using human cadavers as crash test dummies is the golden rule. The golden rule is something we have been told our whole life. It states that people should treat others the way they would like to be treated. Would you like to be tossed around in a car without any control? I didn't think so. Many people see this as very disrespectful toward the dead. The main respect should go to the family. After someone is dead the family should get a state of peace. The body being jostled does not give the family peace. It is not respectful for the family to have to deal with the not knowing of where the body is, or what is happening to it. Also, when the donors sign up for body donation they do not know where their body is going. They have no say at all, which is something that many people disagree on. They believe the consent should have more options. In the book it tells us that in 1978 John Moss investigated the issue deeply. He tried very hard to make the use of cadavers for this reason unavailable. His reasoning was " personal repugnance."

A second reason many people are against using human cadavers as crash test dummies is because of their religion. Some people believe that if their body is not in whole then in after-life it will not be either. Also some religions are against this and their believers will stay with them. They also think that when a body dies the soul should be put to rest, but how is it put to rest when it's used for crash testing? They also don't agree with the consent

forms and believe they are “ lying” or deceiving” which is something religions do not support.

A third reason is that many people believe the body of the donors could be used for something better and more helpful to the people. Their thinking process is that there are many trainees that are going to be doctors, shouldn't they get more practice? They don't see the point in wasting bodies on crash testing when the medical world is growing and needing more and more bodies. People understand that cars need to be safe however they know that they have tested enough human cadavers so that they know the speeds that can harm a human, and they could use dummies to make the cars safer. They also think that if people are more cautious then there will be fewer crashes because cars today are very safe. But the medical world is also going to be getting new doctors so they are in a constant demand of cadavers. They just want the bodies to be used for better reasons.

Mary Roach's book did a great job of showing what happens when the human cadavers are used as crash test dummies. Her book was always very accurate about what happens to the bodies. One thing she was right about was the fact that Wayne State University was the first to test human cadavers as crash test dummies. This book tells in detail what happens to the human cadavers as they are in this process. All of the things she says are correct. She is very factual and shows a lot of evidence to support her theories and the things that she says.

In conclusion there are many reasons people are for and against using human cadavers as crash test dummies. Some reasons people are for using

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human cadavers as crash test dummies is because they receive more accurate feedback, its cost beneficial, and utilitarianism. Many people are also against the use of human cadavers because the golden rule, religion, and because the bodies could be used for better things. Each perspective makes a good argument.

Do you like the book?

Mary Roach's book was a very interesting read. It told me a lot of facts that I did not know. I did find someone of the things she compared things to very disturbing (chicken noodle soup, Rice Krispies, etc.). I did not know that the donated bodies were used for so many things. One thing I was very shocked about was the body farm. I also don't completely agree with the body farm. I don't see what the point in it is even after I read that chapter. The things that happen to a decaying body however were fascinating. Mary Roach did a great job at giving factual information for people to learn more about the subject matter. I believe that the things they do with cadavers are worth the arguments people put against them. The use of cadavers has saved many lives; for example, many lives have been saved by the crash testing, medical uses, etc. I also believe that some things that people did in the past were uncalled for. One thing that supports this is the transplantation of heads. This is not something that is realistic and it's not a main need. The money spent on that could have been used for something that was needed. For the most part I did enjoy the book. I enjoyed learning everything Mary Roach had to say and it made me second guess people donating their bodies.