

Do we really need a brain?

Business



While I was procrastinating my school work and browsing through Youtube videos at 2: 00 in the morning, I came across a captivating link. Out of my irresistible curiosity, I clicked on the 11-minute video, which left me in shock for the next three days. What I came across was a neuroscientist-confirmed statement that our brain isn't really necessary for our behavior at all.

You may say this is a totally far-fetched claim. The human brain is the central organ of the human nervous system that controls all functions of the body and interprets information from the outside world. How can we believe this bizarre fact? But consider this extreme and strange case: John Lorber, a professor at the University of Sheffield, was treating one of the mathematics students for a minor ailment: the student's head was larger than the average. After a CAT-scan was performed, he discovered that he didn't actually have a brain. His skull was full of cerebrospinal fluid, meaning that he had a severe form of hydrocephalus, the condition in which the cerebrospinal fluid becomes enclosed inside instead of entering the bloodstream.

In addition, the weight of the cerebrospinal fluid inside the student's head was barely up to 300g; this weighs up to approximately 1/5 of a normal person's brain, which is 1, 500g. Virtually, it was the equivalent of not having a brain. Nevertheless, what was more appalling was that he appeared to be a normal intelligent individual. He was academically gifted, known for an IQ of 126 and was expected to graduate in the following year. Normally, the following condition to others is fatal. Even in the case that an individual survives with the condition, he/she is usually critically handicapped.

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Lober hypothesized that there are probably more cases similar to the Sheffield student, and tested 600 patients to take a CAT-scan. The results were flabbergasting; 60 out of the 600 were living with 95% of their brain missing. Half of them were living an exceptionally normal life, and the average IQ was over 100. A British biochemist, Donald R. Fordsdyke, revisited this phenomenon.

If a hydrocephalic brain can store the same amount of information as a normal brain, it can be stated that the brain size does not correspond with the quantity of information stored. He declares that “ we need to consider the possibility that memory is stored in an extremely minute, subatomic form, as yet unknown to biochemists and physiologists.” Fordsdyke explains this possibility as “ cloud storage,” where the brain acts as a transmitter of some form of electromagnetic wave/particle. But no one seems to have looked through this possibility thoroughly; no detailed post-mortem brain tissue studies have been published. As to the question, “ Do we really need a brain?”, Fordsdyke disagrees that the brain is unnecessary; “ You have to be dramatic in order for people to listen,” they say.

However, it does demonstrate that the brain is capable of functioning in conditions that were thought to have been impossible. Although his seemingly scientific approach to this problem makes you think about it more, he accepts the fact that the human brain, indeed, needs to be more researched.