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# Japan proposes framework for conducting ethical research on brain organoids

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**The ethics of research on conscious artificial brains**



Researchers from Kobe University and Kyoto University's Institute for the Advanced Study of Human Biology (WPI-ASHBi) in Japan, in collaboration with other philosophers in Japan and Canada, have written a paper on the ethics of research using conscious brain organoids.

Current brain organoids are different in size and maturity from normal brains. More importantly, they do not produce any behavioral output, demonstrating they are still a primitive model of a real brain. However, as research generates brain organoids of higher complexity, they will eventually have the ability to feel and think.

Thus, researchers in anticipation lay out an ethical framework that assumes brain organoids already have consciousness rather than waiting for the day when we can fully confirm that they do.

The framework proposed by the study recommends that research on human brain organoids follows the ethical principles similar to those for animal experiments. Therefore, recommendations include using the minimum number of organoids possible and doing the upmost to prevent pain and suffering while considering the interests of the public and patients.

The paper also argues that this framework is not exclusive to brain organoids. It can be applied to anything that is perceived to hold consciousness, such as fetuses, animals and even robots.