

# Letter to the Editor: The Pundit Speaks

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## “ Is Right-Brain vs. Left-Brain a Myth ?”

Frequently, in medical science, we find we have been misled to believe that long-held myths are scientific facts. Such seems to be the case with the old myth that "people can be labeled as either a "right-brained" or a "left-brained" thinker. Left-brained people were thought to be logical, detail-oriented and analytical; whereas, right-brained people were thought to be creative, thoughtful and subjective. Neuroscientists, at the University of Utah, have described new research studies, which assert that there is no evidence within brain imaging that indicates some people are right-brained or left-brained. It commonly believed the terms left-brained and right-brained have come to refer to personality types, with an assumption that some people use the right side of their brain more, while others use the left side more. Following a two-year study, University of Utah researchers have debunked that myth through identifying specific networks in the left and right brain that process lateralized functions. Investigators analyzed over one thousand resting brain scans of people between the ages of seven and 29. Experts said, "In each person, they studied functional lateralization of the brain measured for thousands of brain regions —finding no relationship that individuals preferentially use their left - brain network or right- brain network more often. However, language tends to be on the left and attention more on the right side. But people don't tend to have a stronger left- or right-sided brain network. It seems to be determined more connection by connection." In the study, investigators broke up the brain into 7,000 regions and found ground breaking results, which will likely change the way scientists think about the old right-brain versus left-brain theory. Investigator, Jared Nielsen, said, "Everyone should understand the personality types associated with the terminology 'left-brained' and 'right-brained' and how they relate to him or her personally; however, we just don't see patterns where the whole left-brain network is more connected or the whole right-brain network is more connected in some people. It may be that personality types have nothing to do with one hemisphere being more active, stronger, or more connected."

In the America that I love, we commonly find that medical mythology is as pervasive as medical or scientific fact. As it relates to organ donation, two popular myths are that older people can't become organ donors and that organ donation could cost your family or estate a lot of money. Actually, there is no age limit for organ donation and no costs to an organ donor's family. Myths surround the use of heart stents to prop open a coronary artery and two major medical organizations identified "heart stents" as one of five highly overused medical interventions. So, please do not fall victim to medical myths.

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