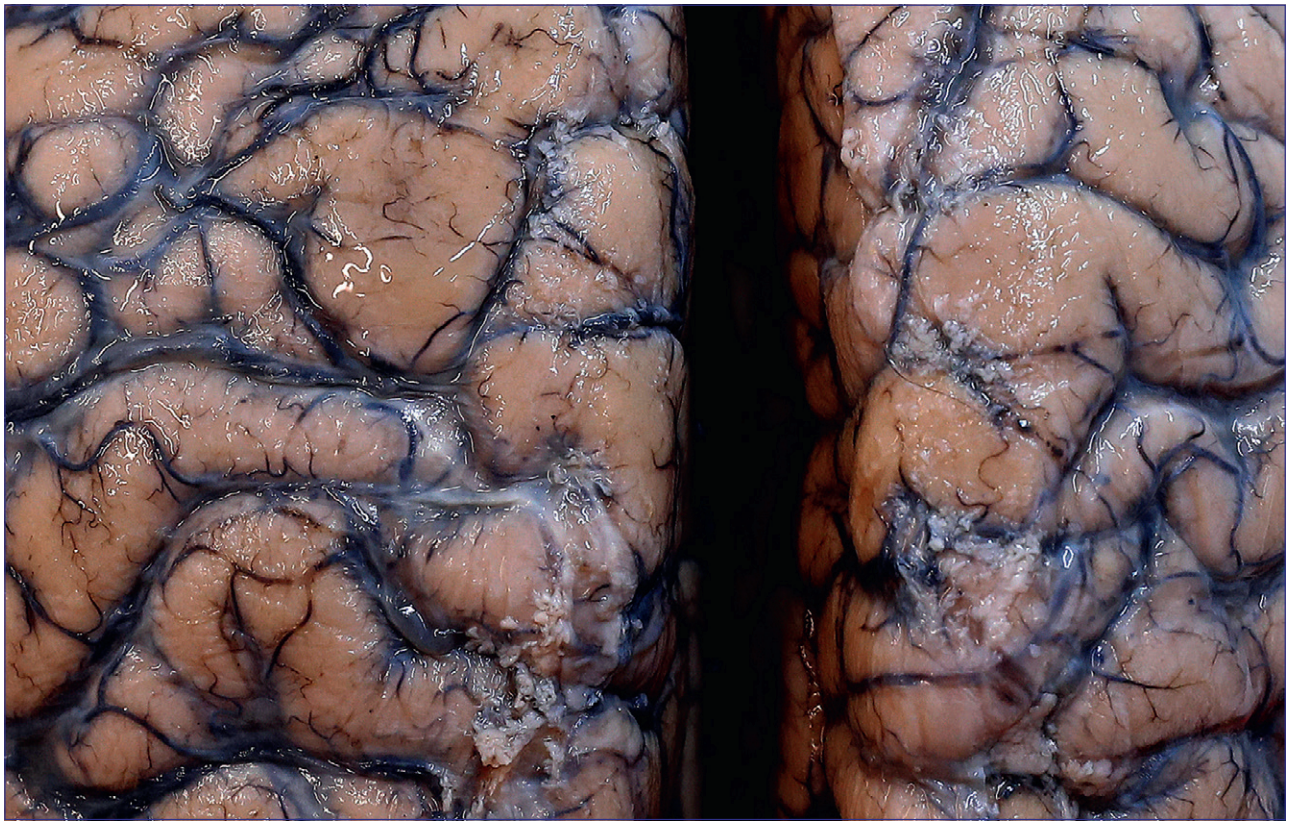


A human brain, part of a collection of more than 3000 brains at Duffel Psychiatric Hospital, Belgium, that could help to provide insight into psychiatric illness.

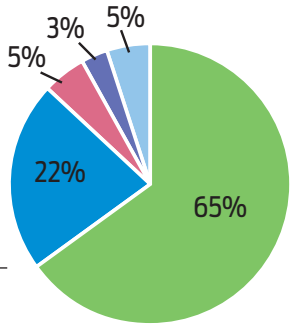
Picture: Yves Herman/Reuters

MJA InSight Poll

Rigorous research into psychedelic drugs should be approved in Australia

Total votes = 129

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree



Take part in next week's poll on: www.mja.com.au/insight

MJA Podcasts

Professor Marjorie Walker is professor of Anatomic Pathology at the University of Newcastle. She discusses coeliac disease to accompany her co-authored narrative review published in this issue.

Professor Billie Bonevski is a behavioural scientist and research fellow at the University of Newcastle. She talks about tackling smoking cessation in Australian priority publications to accompany her co-authored perspective in this issue.

Associate Professor Denese Playford is a medical educator at the Rural Clinical School of Western Australia. Professor Ian Puddey is from the University of Western Australia's School of Medicine. They discuss their co-authored research article in this issue.

Dr Zain Kassam is chief medical officer at Open Biome and a research affiliate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He talks about faecal microbiota transplantation for *Clostridium difficile* to accompany his co-authored short report in this issue.

Podcasts are available at www.mja.com.au/podcasts and from iTunes.

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One in 20 Australian adolescents has a food allergy

Approximately one in 20 Australian adolescents aged 10 to 14 years has a food allergy, according to research from the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute (MCRI), published in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*. The results of the study, one of the few population-based studies in the world to examine the frequency of food allergy in early adolescence using the gold standard of oral food challenge, indicated that the prevalence of food allergy is around 5% during early adolescence. The School Nuts Study was undertaken by the Australian Centre of Food and Allergy Research, based at the MCRI. Schools were randomly selected from greater metropolitan Melbourne, and students aged 10–14 years, and their parents, were asked to complete a questionnaire about the adolescent's food allergy or food-related reactions. Of 20 965 eligible students, 9816 students (46.8%) provided parent and student questionnaires, 5016 had a complete parent response and underwent clinic evaluation, and 4800 students completed questionnaires only. Clinic evaluation consisted of skin prick tests and food challenge if eligible. The skin test covered 15 food allergens – egg white, cow's milk, soy, peanut, cashew, almond, hazelnut, walnut, pistachio, macadamia, pecan, Brazil nut, pine nut, sesame and shellfish. A food challenge was undertaken if students were suspected of having a current food allergy on the basis of their response to the questionnaire, and further information was collected by phone and from skin prick test results. Peanut and tree nut were the most common allergies, with each affecting 2–3% of adolescents. Cashews (1.6%) accounted for the highest prevalence of the tree nut allergy, and egg (0.5%) had the highest reaction rate among the other (non-nut) foods. The authors acknowledged the likelihood of some participation selection bias which may have slightly affected the results.

http://www.jacionline.org/article/S0091-6749(17)31017-5/abstract

High rates of antibiotic prescriptions in Australian infants

Half of Australian infants are treated with antibiotics during their first year of life, according to research from the MCRI, published in the *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*. The study, based on data from the Barwon Infant Study, found that at least 20% of prescriptions were for what the parents thought were viral infections. The researchers found that 50% of the babies had at least one antibiotic prescription during the first year of life – a much higher proportion than in almost all comparable industrialised countries. One in eight infants received three or more antibiotic prescriptions. The antibiotic prescription rate is almost 50% higher than in the United Kingdom, and almost 400% higher than in Switzerland. Children with siblings were more likely to be prescribed antibiotics, possibly because of the sharing of germs. Antibiotics were also commonly prescribed for ear infections, where antibiotics are generally ineffective and can usually be avoided. Compared with data from a study published in 2012, Australia has one of the highest antibiotic prescription rates worldwide and these rates have increased by 230% over the past decade.

http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jpc.13616/full

Cate Swannell doi: 10.5694/mja17.n2108