Brain scans predict whether brain damaged patients likely to return to consciousness

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

A simple measurement using a device available in every hospital could distinguish [brain damaged patients](#) who are likely to "wake up" from those who are not, scientists reported.

Predicting which [unconscious patients](#) will remain that way forever and who is likely to recover is so difficult that even expert physicians get it wrong in about 40 percent of cases, said Dr. Nicholas Schiff of Weill Cornell Medical Center in New York City, who was not involved in the new study.

An estimated 200,000 to 300,000 people in the United States are living in that gray area between life and death — either in an unresponsive wakefulness state (previously called a vegetative state) or a minimally conscious state. In the former, people look awake but are wholly unaware of their surroundings and do not consciously respond to sights, sounds, or touch. Those in a minimally conscious state sometimes respond to a command or other stimulus, but often do not — hence the difficulty in distinguishing the two. But the latter are much more likely to regain consciousness.

Read full, original post: [Brain scans strongly predict return of consciousness in vegetative patients](#)