

Terminally ill cancer patients donating their bodies for research on how tumors spread

It sounds macabre, but it's important research. [Andrew] Rowan is one of a team of experts working on a new study into the way tumours spread. The Posthumous Evaluation of Advanced Cancer Environment (PEACE) study is an ongoing project, funded by Cancer Research UK, that follows a simple premise: terminally ill cancer patients agree to donate their body to science after they die, allowing researchers to perform autopsies to collect their blood and tissue for testing.

Until recently, scientists working in labs such as this one have relied upon [cancer](#) tissue taken from surgically removed biopsies – a small section of disease taken from one site while the patient is alive. But the scope for experimentation with these samples is limited, and reveals very little about the wider ecosystem of the disease inside a patient's body. Thanks to the volunteers signed up to PEACE, the team is now able to access entire, fresh organs from multiple sites in a patient's body. It is the only study like it in the world, and the researchers believe the discoveries made from it could be revolutionary – both in furthering scientific understanding of [cancer](#), and in the continuing quest to find a cure.

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