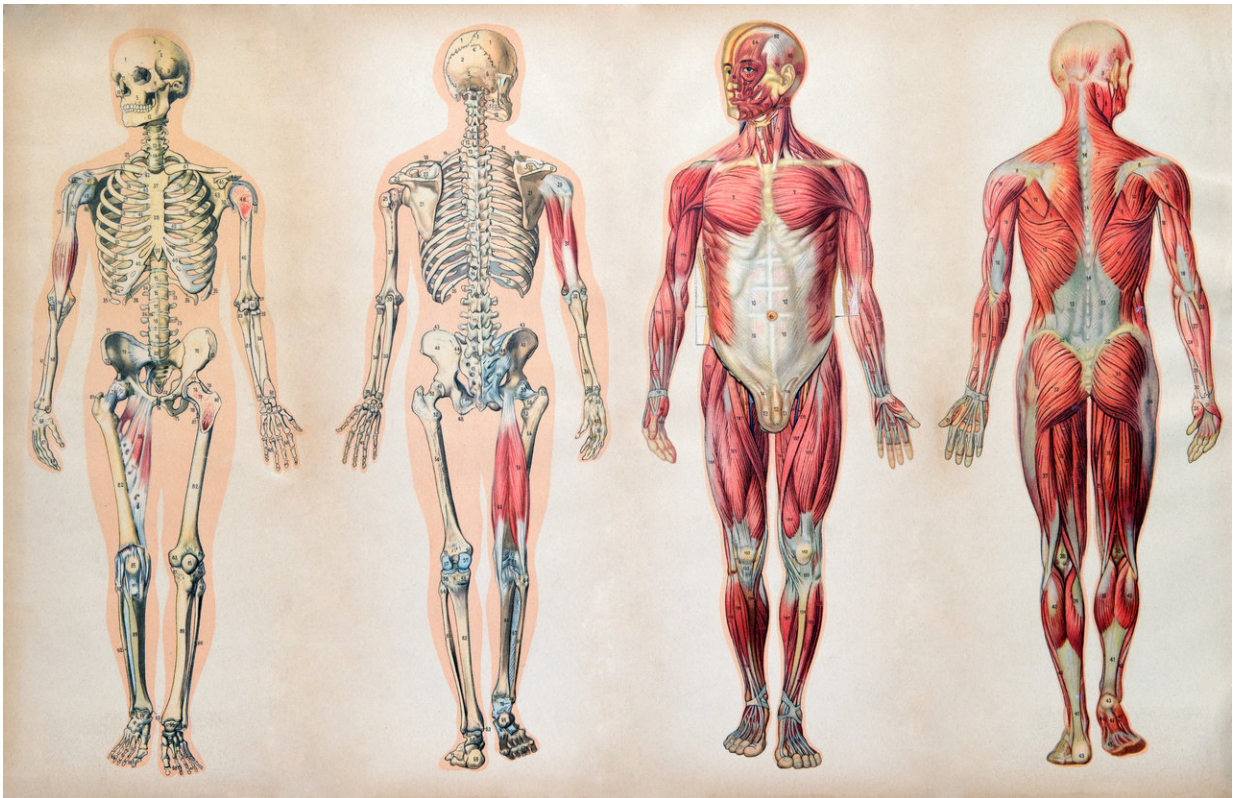


# Public's poor knowledge of anatomy may hamper healthcare

November 7 2017

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Vintage chart of the human body. Credit: Lancaster University

Health screening campaigns which target a specific organ may lack effectiveness if the public have a poor knowledge of anatomy say researchers.



Middle-aged non-graduates scored better than young graduates in an anatomical quiz given to the public by researchers from Lancaster Medical School.

Dr Adam Taylor said: "Whilst many of the public do not have or need formal anatomical [knowledge](#), it is beneficial in monitoring and explaining their own health."

Members of the public were asked to place the following on a blank template of a [human body](#); the brain, cornea, lungs, liver, diaphragm, heart, stomach, appendix, bladder, kidneys, pancreas, gallbladder, spleen, adrenals, thyroid, hamstrings, biceps, triceps, quadriceps, cruciate ligament and Achilles tendon.

These terms were chosen based on mentions in everyday life such as keeping fit, sports injuries, TV shows and online searches for abdominal pain.

The only organ which 100% of people answered correctly was the brain.

The biceps muscle and the cornea were the next most correctly answered structures.

The organs which the public knew least about were the [adrenal glands](#) which less than 15% of people could identify and many thought mistakenly were in the neck.

- Men scored higher than women in identifying muscles but not internal organs.
- Graduates did not score better than non-graduates
- Older people scored higher than young people, peaking in the 40-49 age group which may be because this is when people begin visiting the doctor more often



- People working in any health-related job scored significantly higher than people in other jobs.
- People who had visited a healthcare professional prior to the quiz fared no better than those who had not.

Dr Taylor said the [quiz](#) revealed the public's eagerness to learn anatomy despite their limited knowledge of the human body.

**More information:** *Anatomical Sciences Education*, [DOI: 10.1002/ase.1746](#)

Provided by Lancaster University

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