

**NEGOTIATING MARGINAL STATES IN LIFE AND DEATH: A CASE OF A SIX-WEEK  
FETUS AND A BRAIN DEAD BOY**

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In this poster, we compare a six-week fetus to a brain-dead boy to illustrate multiple inconsistencies and flaws in conventionally accepted neurological criteria for determination of death (brain death). We demonstrate the disparate ways a six-week fetus and a brain-dead boy are regulated by social policy and the law and critically examine the biological and normative assumptions that distinguish these ethically ambiguous "marginal states" at the beginning and end of life. Ultimately, we find the two states to be physiologically analogous, with no biological or ethical criteria currently permitted for brain death that would coherently define the fetus as alive. We conclude that this paradox is ultimately untenable and explore the implications for legal, social, and medical policy surrounding both the beginning of end of life.