Dear Sydney,

Could you help me about the following matter? There is a man called David Marr in or near your laboratory. I want to ask his advice about the following: Alan Hodgkin suggested he would be a good person.

I have got to give a lecture in the Autumn in which I want to make a plea that people should be used for important work when they are young, or at any rate more used than they are at present. One can adduce a number of reasons in justification of this plea. But I wanted to make the following remark:

Brain weight peaks at about 25, and the number of cortical cells, after a period of constancy from birth to the early twenties, declines sharply to the 90s. Each day of our adult lives more than 100,000 nerve cells die. In spite of one specious assertion that this loss is associated with increased memory storage, it seems far more plausible to associate this physiological decay with the less pleasant aspects of ageing, with decreased learning ability, shorter memory span and lower I.Q.

I have one reference to this which may be relevant - Brody, 1955, J. Comp. Neurol., 102, 51; but I would very much like to know, first, if what is said above is acceptable; if not, what modifications are needed; and, lastly, whether there are any more recent references confirming what is said above.

Lord Rothschild