

# Brain health

Brain [health](#) refers to the state of optimal functioning of the [brain](#) across its physical, cognitive, emotional, and social domains. It encompasses the ability of an individual to maintain mental clarity, emotional balance, [resilience](#), and the capacity for [learning](#), [adaptation](#), and make [decisions](#) effectively throughout their life.

## Key Components of Brain Health

### Cognitive Functioning

[Memory](#), [attention](#), [problem-solving](#), and [decision-making](#) abilities.

### Emotional Well-being

Regulation of emotions, stress management, and resilience against mental health disorders like anxiety and depression.

### Physical Integrity of the Brain

Healthy structure and function, free from injury or disease (e.g., dementia, stroke, or traumatic brain injury).

### Social Functioning

The ability to engage in meaningful relationships and community interactions.

### Neurological Health

Proper functioning of neural systems and protection against neurodegenerative diseases.

### Mental Flexibility and Learning

Capacity for adaptation, learning new skills, and acquiring knowledge over time.

### Determinants of Brain Health

Biological Factors: Genetics, prenatal health, and age-related changes. Lifestyle Choices: Diet, physical activity, sleep, and avoidance of harmful substances (e.g., excessive alcohol, drugs).

Environmental Factors: Access to education, healthcare, clean air, and opportunities for mental stimulation. Psychosocial Factors: Social support, stress levels, and mental health care access. Brain health is increasingly recognized as essential for individual well-being and societal progress, particularly in aging populations and during global transitions requiring upskilling and adaptability.

## Conceptual and theoretical studies

Optimal brain health is essential to smoothing major global skill-intensive economic transitions, such as the bioeconomy, green, care economy and digital transitions. Good brain health is vital to socio-economic sustainability, productivity and well-being. The care transition focuses on recognizing and investing in care services and care work as essential for economic growth and social well-being. The green transition involves shifting towards environmentally sustainable and fairer societies to combat climate change and environmental degradation. The digital transition aims to unlock digital growth potential and deploy innovative solutions for businesses and citizens, and to improve the accessibility and efficiency of services. The bioeconomy transition refers to the shift towards an economy based on products, services and processes derived from biological resources, such as plants and microorganisms. Brain capital, which encompasses brain health and brain skills, is a critical economic asset for the success of economies of the future. The brain economy transition from a brain-negative (brain-unhealthy) economy, which depletes brain capital, to a brain-positive (brain-healthy) economy, which arrests and reverses the loss of brain capital, will be foundational to these major transitions. Increased brain capital is vital to educational attainment, upskilling and reskilling. In this paper, we provide a detailed roadmap for the brain economy transition <sup>1)</sup>.

The paper's central thesis—that brain health and brain capital are pivotal to navigating global economic transitions—is compelling and innovative. However, its potential impact is diluted by a lack of empirical support, specific policy recommendations, and attention to practical implementation challenges. By addressing these gaps, the authors could provide a more robust and actionable framework for fostering a brain-positive economy that aligns with the demands of the future.

<sup>1)</sup>

Nail-Beatty O, Ibanez A, Ayadi R, Swieboda P, Njamnshi AK, Occhipinti JA, Hynes W, Ikiz B, Castro-Aldrete L, O'Brien K, Platt ML, Adalat S, Abdullah JM, Dhamija RK, Merali Z, Mostert C, Beck D, Saxena S, Salama M, Abdelraheem OM, Destrebecq F, Slavich GM, Shehu B, Fieggen G, Ghogomu PM, Bassetti CLA, Eyre HA. Brain health is essential for smooth economic transitions: towards socio-economic sustainability, productivity and well-being. *Brain Commun.* 2024 Oct 30;6(6):fcae360. doi: 10.1093/braincomms/fcae360. PMID: 39670109; PMCID: PMC11635447.

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