

China takes closer look at brain surgery

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The Chinese government was reportedly working on a plan to regulate a controversial form of brain surgery used to treat mental illness.

Dr. Wang Yifang, a surgeon who performs the procedure, told The Wall Street Journal that senior government officials met last month to evaluate the procedure, which involves drilling tiny holes in the skull and burning small parts of brain.

The newspaper said thousands of patients with problems ranging from depression to schizophrenia have spent thousands of dollars for the procedure, with some patients complaining the surgery didn't help them or left them with serious side effects.

Yifang said government officials support the surgery but agreed last month that a set of standards to govern the use of the surgery was needed. The Journal, which reported on the procedure in November, said an official with the China Medical Association confirmed a recent meeting to discuss surgery for mental illness but declined to provide more details.

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