



PRESS RELEASE

A WORLD FIRST - UTERUS TRANSPLANT BETWEEN IDENTICAL TWIN SISTERS: THE FIRST BABY CONCEIVED THANKS TO THE COLLABORATION AMONG INTERNATIONAL TEAMS OF EXPERTS IN REPRODUCTIVE SURGERY AND REPRODUCTIVE MEDICINE WAS BORN IN BOLOGNA, ITALY

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A complex medical and surgical procedure to allow her twin sister, who was born without uterus due to a congenital malformation, to fulfil her dream of becoming a mother. The protagonists of this story are a woman residing in Italy and her identical twin sister who decided to donate her uterus.

A major act of love, which materialized thanks to the contribution of an international team of clinicians, composed of world-famous professionals. The Swedish team led by Prof. Mats Brännström, Director of Stockholm IVF (Eugin Group) and pioneer of this technique, performed the uterus transplant. The procedure was carried out in March 2017 at Children University Hospital in Belgrade (Serbia), directed by Prof. Zoran Radojicic. Local professionals, including Dr. Milan Milenkovic and Dr. Mirorslav Djordjevic, were also involved in the procedure, together with Prof. Stefan Tullius, Chief of the Division of Transplant Surgery at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School. The uterus explant lasted 10 hours, the implant procedure 5 hours. Both patients recovered excellently after surgery.

Subsequently, a successful IVF treatment using the couple's own cryopreserved embryo was performed at Stockholm IVF.

During her normal pregnancy, the uterus transplant recipient was assisted by Dr. Luca Gianaroli, Scientific Director at S.I.S.Me.R. (Bologna, Italy), the Reproductive Medicine Unit specifically selected by Prof. Brännström due to the expertise and professionalism of its medical team.

A normal C-section was performed this morning by an international medical team at S. Orsola University Hospital in Bologna, Italy. The baby (a boy weighing 2970 gr) and the mother are in good health.

Prof. Brännström's uterus transplant program started in 2013. As of today, 9 transplants were performed, leading to 8 live births and to an ongoing pregnancy. Worldwide, 40 transplantation attempts were made so far, leading to 12 live births, including this case.

Today's birth can be considered a world first, as it is the first live birth following uterus transplant between identical twins. Notably, immunosuppression required in all other transplant cases is not necessary in the constellation of genetically identical twins. This historical result was achieved thanks to the collaboration among specialists from Gothenburg University (Sweden), Stockholm IVF (Sweden), Belgrade University (Serbia), Harvard University (U.S.A) and S.I.S.Me.R. (Italy). This delivery takes place exactly 40 years after the birth of the first IVF baby and 60 years after the birth of the first baby born from a woman who underwent

solid organ transplantation. Also that case was preceded by a transplant procedure (kidney) between identical twins.

“This is an important milestone in the fields of reproductive medicine and transplantation surgery.” says Prof. Mats Brännström proudly. *“It adds on the initial success from transplantation from mother to daughter, where we have seen a take-home-baby rate of 85%”.*

Prof. Stefan Tullius added enthusiastically: *“Indeed, the identical twin uterine transplant procedure is reminiscent of the early days of organ transplantation more than 60 years back, when the first successful kidney transplant among identical twins took place. This procedure is unique in many ways, not only because an international medical team was involved, but also thanks to the patient’s sister’s selfless gesture to donate her uterus.”*

Dr. Luca Gianaroli is very excited about the outcome of this long medical journey: *“This incredible result comes from the combination of the most sophisticated surgical techniques with the latest innovations in reproductive medicine. We are now able to provide effective therapeutic options for hopeless sterility cases which until now could only be solved by surrogacy, a technique, by the way, forbidden in many countries.”*

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