

How one surgeon harnesses the regenerative power of pig guts to save fingers, limbs

Bioengineers have made great strides harnessing the body's ability to start over...[still] much of regenerative medicine's promise remains inside the laboratory...

Some clinicians, like Dr. Eugenio Rodriguez, aren't waiting for trials to be completed to help patients. Instead, they are already adding regenerative technologies to their medical toolboxes, and using them to save human limbs.

Profile picture and or type unknown

Dr. Eugenio Rodriguez

Rodriguez first made headlines in 2013 when a horse bit off the index finger of Paul Halpern, a 33-year-old horse trainer. Halpern's insurance company pushed him to amputate the rest of his finger, but Rodriguez built a rough mold, or extracellular matrix (ECM), of Halpern's missing fingertip using a commercially available medical patch made of pig bladder. Rodriguez attached the mold to the stump of the remaining finger and the bone and even the missing fingernail grew back.

Since that first patient came through the door, Rodriguez claims to have used the technique hundreds of times, and not just for fingertips, but to save entire limbs.

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But Rodriguez isn't the first doctor to use the technique before awaiting the results of trials. Steven Wolf, an Army doctor, began using the technique on injured war veterans at San Antonio's Brooke Army Medical Center.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Revisited: The Regenerative Power of Pig Guts](#)

For more background on the Genetic Literacy Project, read [GLP on Wikipedia](#)