

Conjoined twins: How do you decide which one to save?

Doctors at the MassGeneral Hospital for Children faced an ethical challenge when a pair of conjoined twins born in Africa arrived last year seeking surgery that could save only one of them, according to a medical journal article due out Thursday.

The twins were connected at the abdomen and pelvis, sharing a liver and bladder, and had three legs.

An examination by doctors at the hospital determined that only one of the girls was likely to survive the surgery, but that if doctors did not act, both would die, said Dr. Brian Cummings, chairman of the hospital's pediatric ethics committee.

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The smaller twin, as expected, died following the 14-hour surgery conducted in mid-2016, but the survivor, now 3 years old, is recovering, Cummings said.

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The case had posed the hospital with the challenge both of ensuring that the parents understood the risks of the procedure and that the hundreds of medical professionals needed to perform the complex series of operations to separate the children were comfortable with the ethics of the situation.

"For some people, it's an act of killing and others see this as the only way I can help," Cummings said. "We don't want to put people in a place where they don't think they're doing good care."

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Conjoined twins posed ethical dilemma for Massachusetts hospital](#)