

'It is hype and bullshit': Scientist challenges claims that pig-to-human xenotransplantation is close to realization

Steve Holtzman was awoken by a 1 a.m. call from a doctor at Duke University asking if he could put some pigs on a plane and fly them from Ohio to North Carolina that day. A motorcyclist had gotten into a horrific crash, the doctor explained. He believed the pigs' livers, sutured onto the patient's skin like an external filter, might be able to tide the young man over until a donor liver became available.

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The results were [published in the New England Journal of Medicine](#) in 1994.

Which is why Holtzman was shocked and a little bit confused when he read reports [recently] that doctors at NYU had conducted a "[groundbreaking](#)" procedure by, with the family's consent, taking a pig kidney and suturing it to the leg of a brain-dead patient for 54 hours.

It was something scientists could've done for years, he said. And it didn't get them closer to actually making animal-to-human transplants possible, or addressing the field's main goal: solving a national organ shortage that [kills 20 Americans](#) per day.

"It is hype and bullshit," said Holtzman, who is now the chairman of a Chinese company working on xenotransplantation. "It belongs in the National Enquirer."

[This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.](#)