

Man who received genetically modified pig heart in first-ever surgery dies

A 57-year-old Maryland man who had received a genetically modified pig heart in a first-of-its-kind transplant surgery has died, the University of Maryland Medical Center said [March 9].

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[David] Bennett had terminal heart disease, and had received a transplant on January 7. Bennett was deemed ineligible for a conventional heart transplant or an artificial heart pump after reviews of his medical records, and the pig heart was the only available option, the medical center said at the time.

Revivicor, a regenerative medicine company based in Virginia, had provided the heart. Three genes that are responsible for rejection of pig organs by human immune systems were removed from the donor pig, and one gene was taken out to prevent excessive pig heart tissue growth. Six human genes responsible for immune acceptance were inserted.

The medical center said the transplanted heart performed well for several weeks without any sign of rejection.

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Before the transplant, Bennett had said he knew it was "a shot in the dark."

"It was either die or do this transplant. I want to live. I know it's a shot in the dark, but it's my last choice," Bennett had said, according to a previous news release from the medical center.

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