Infographic: Are genetically modified pigs the future of organ transplants?

So how close are we to using pigs for a limitless supply of organs to solve the global shortage?

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Using animal organs in the human body is an old idea, and has ranged from “zest for life” chimpanzee testicle implants to replacement kidneys and hearts taken from our primate relatives. The latter often ended in death soon afterwards. The problem is, our immune system treats the transplanted organ like an infection and attacks.

The focus these days is on pigs, as their organs are roughly the right size and we have centuries of experience farming them.

...

Xenotransplantation has always felt like the next big thing in transplant medicine. There’s no doubt a series of landmark operations have been performed, but only more research will tell us whether the field – and its grand dreams – will ever come of age.

[Transplant surgeon Dr Jayme] Locke added: “Our goal would be to have one 10-gene edited pig be able to save a patient with kidney failure, a patient with liver failure, a patient with heart failure and a patient with end-stage lung disease.

“That would be a remarkable accomplishment and I genuinely believe that we will be there during my lifetime.”

This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.