

Rare 'domino' transplant preformed

3 October 2006

U.S. transplant surgeons have performed a "domino" transplant procedure to save two patients suffering a life-threatening liver condition.

The surgeons at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and University of Pittsburgh Medical Center said it was only the nation's second domino transplant involving a patient with maple syrup urine disease.

Domino transplants are so named for the sequential nature of the procedure -- an organ from a deceased donor is transplanted into the first recipient. The first recipient's organ then is transplanted into a second recipient. Domino transplants are a rare, but effective, way of overcoming the shortage of organs available for transplant, physicians said.

The Pittsburgh surgeons transplanted a liver from an unidentified dead donor into Nickolai Rudd, an adult patient at Children's with MSUD, a rare and potentially life-threatening genetic disease. Rudd's liver was transplanted into James Paulshock, an adult suffering from liver failure caused by primary sclerosing cholangitis.

The MSUD that afflicted Rudd was not passed on to Paulshock through his donated liver, while Rudd's new liver metabolically cured his MSUD.

The transplants, performed May 30, were announced Monday and both patients' new livers are said to be functioning normally.

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APA citation: Rare 'domino' transplant preformed (2006, October 3) retrieved 27 April 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2006-10-rare-domino-transplant-preformed.html>

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