

Shoulder transplant performed in Italy

April 25 2008

Doctors in Italy said they performed the first transplant of a human shoulder.

The procedure, performed at Bologna's Rizzoli hospital, involved the insertion of a small chunk of bone and cartilage to replace an arthritic joint in a 47-year-old former bodybuilder who suffered from severe post-traumatic arthrosis, ANSA reported Thursday.

Dr. Sandro Giannini said the graft was attached to the collar-bone and humerus with metal pins. The surgeon said the graft, which is capable of producing connective tissue, gives the patient a joint similar to the one he had before.

Giannini said the transplant procedure should only be used on patients who are young enough that artificial joints would have to be replaced when they wear out.

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