

Surgeon's remove 2-pound tumor from infant's face

May 28 2009, By Mike Clarystaff Writer

In the arms of his mother, Jordan Smith looks much like any other 2-month-old: a wide-eyed, chubby-cheeked child in green-and-yellow overalls and matching cap.

But his mother, school bus driver Kimberly Robinson, 35, and a team of doctors at the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Medical Center call him a miracle, a child whose life was threatened by a 2-pound tumor that covered his face.

"It was huge, very rare," said Ramzi Younis, a pediatric surgeon. "But as of now, we should not have any doubt that he can lead a normal life."

The remarkable story of Jordan Smith's birth was outlined Wednesday at Jackson Memorial's Holtz Children's Hospital, where the March 25 delivery took place.

Doctors originally described the mass covering the infant's face as an "undeveloped twin protruding from his mouth."

However, Younis backed away from that description Wednesday. "Was it a baby? No," he said of the tumor. "Was it a living human being? No."

Robinson, a Liberty City, Fla., resident with three other children, said she was alerted to complications with her pregnancy in the 17th week. Doctors at one hospital, which she did not identify, suggested an abortion after an ultrasound revealed what appeared to be a mass on the

side of the baby's face.

"I was crying, emotional, praying for days," Robinson said. "I drive special-needs kids on the bus, so I know some of the challenges they have to face."

Distraught over the decision she faced, Robinson said, "I would lay in the bed and want to give up. And he would give me a kick, as if to say, 'If I'm fighting, why not you?' That gave me the push to go on."

After getting in touch with specialists at Holtz, obstetrician/gynecologist Elvire Jacques shepherded Robinson's case and attended the delivery. She described Robinson as "the most dedicated mother I've ever known."

Since the mass originated in the back of the baby's mouth and covered his nose, Younis had just minutes to insert a tube beneath the [tumor](#) and into the airway before cutting the umbilical cord.

Nine days later Younis removed the growth from Jordan's face. The mass weighed almost a fourth of the baby's birth weight of 8 pounds, 11 ounces. In most cases, such tumors kill the child, Younis said.

Jordan is to be released from the hospital next week.

As Robinson held her son Wednesday, Jordan looked at the lights on the ceiling and responded to her touch.

"He's worth it; he's beautiful," she said.

"There is a purpose for his life," said Robinson, who plans to resume her bus-driving job in the fall. "He's already made me a stronger, better person."

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