

First mother-daughter womb transplant planned

June 14 2011, by Rita Devlin Marier

The world's first mother-daughter uterus transplant could take place next year in Sweden, the head of an international research team in the western Swedish city of Gothenburg said Tuesday.

"We have reached a stage where we have started to plan for a human transplant and we are investigating 10 pairs, most of those are mother and daughters," Mats Braenstroem told AFP, adding the first of such [transplants](#) could take place "hopefully at the beginning of next year."

He added that transplanting a womb from a woman to her daughter would be a world first, although a uterus transplant between two unrelated women took place in Saudi Arabia in 2002.

His international team of [doctors](#) at the Sahlgrenska University Hospital has been researching the subject for a decade and has tested it on animals, he said, explaining there were no particular complications in transplanting a womb from mother to daughter.

"There can just be an advantage because they are more similar in their tissues so there could be less [rejection](#) in that situation," he said.

One of the pairs undergoing the physical and psychological tests required ahead of a possible procedure were quoted in Swedish media Tuesday as saying they were grateful to be part of the project.

"I have been given an opportunity I did not think was possible," a

25-year old woman born without a uterus told tabloid Expressen.

"I have always loved children. Over the past five years I have felt intense sorrow over not being able to have children of my own," she told its competitor Aftonbladet.

The woman could receive a uterus from her 56-year-old mother, who said she no longer had any use for the organ and that it felt natural to do everything she could to help her daughter.

"I think all parents do what they can to help their children if it feels right," she told Aftonbladet.

The daughter insisted receiving the womb she herself emerged from was not a cause for concern.

"It's an organ just like any other and it has no genetic significance. I work as a biology teacher and I don't think its strange," she told Expressen.

The world's first uterus transplant took place in 2002 when doctors in Saudi Arabia transplanted the [womb](#) of a 46-year-old woman to a 26-year-old.

Although blood clots forced the doctors to remove the transplanted organ after 14 weeks, they claimed technical success in the procedure.

Braenstroem said such complications would be less likely in the Swedish transplants.

"We have optimised the technique in our animal models for such a long time. The Saudi Arabia team didn't have any experience at all in animal models before. They did it in humans right away," he explained.

In 2007, scientists planned the first uterus transplant in the United States, but the procedure never went beyond the screening stage.

"The research front has moved forward since 2007 and especially our group has taken big steps forward in this research, so that's why we think we are ready to do this," Braenstroem said.

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