

No surgery for now on two-headed baby in Brazil: doctors

December 22 2011

Doctors in Brazil said Thursday they have decided for now not to attempt to surgically separate a set of conjoined twins who have two heads but share one body and various vital organs.

Doctor Neila Dahas of the Santa Casa de Misericordia Hospital in the northern town of Belem, saying in a statement that "it is impossible to take a decision with relation to surgery, not only because of physical reasons, but ethical ones as well."

The two-headed newborn is actually a set of conjoined twins sharing one body because of a rare birth defect, doctors said Thursday.

The twins, born on Monday and named Jesus and Emanuel in honor of the upcoming Christmas holiday, have distinct brains and spinal cords but share internal organs, appearing externally as a single baby with two heads.

Because both brains are functioning and the twins are in stable condition, doctors have ruled out any kind of surgery for the moment, according to the Santa Casa de Misericordia Hospital in the northern town of Belem.

The two babies "would be twins but ended up being joined together because of a delay in the cellular division," the hospital said.

"It's important to understand that this is two babies and not one baby with two heads," said Dr Neila Dahas, assistant director of the hospital.

"They underwent a battery of tests, and it was found that there are two distinct brains and spinal columns, but they share the other organs."

Dahas added that "it is impossible to make a decision regarding surgery, for both physical and ethical reasons."

The hospital said the 23-year-old mother only learned that she was pregnant with twins at the time of the delivery, when an ultrasound was performed.

The condition, known as dicephalic parapagus, is extremely rare.

But one set of twins born with the condition in 1990, Americans Abby and Brittany Hensel, have led a relatively normal life in the US state of Minnesota and appeared in a documentary in 2008.

(c) 2011 AFP

Citation: No surgery for now on two-headed baby in Brazil: doctors (2011, December 22) retrieved 27 June 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-12-rare-two-headed-baby-born-brazil.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.