

First womb-transplant baby won't be alone for long

October 7 2014, by Maria Cheng



Vincent, the first baby born to a woman who had a womb transplant, is cradled by his mother at an undisclosed location in Sweden, Monday, Oct. 6, 2014. The parents of the baby say they hope they can be an inspiration to others struggling with infertility. After what they describe as a rollercoaster of a journey, the unnamed Swedish couple finally became parents last month, when the mother gave birth to a healthy but premature baby boy. (AP Photo/Ben Jary)

The world's first baby born from a transplanted womb is soon to have

company.

Two more women who became pregnant after having [womb](#) transplants are due to deliver in the next few weeks—and that could be the start of a new wave of babies born this way, say the Swedish doctors who pioneered the technique.

"It means a lot to me that we are able to help patients who have tried for so long to have families," said Dr. Mats Brannstrom, a professor of gynecology and obstetrics at the University of Gothenburg, who led the project that brought about last month's pioneering birth. "This is the last piece of the puzzle in finding a treatment for all women with infertility problems."

Brannstrom predicted there would soon be many more babies born to women who have received donated wombs in countries where doctors are studying the technique, including Australia, Britain, the U.S., Japan and China.

Brannstrom said he has also started work on trying to grow a womb in the lab. That involves taking a womb from a deceased donor, stripping it of its DNA, then using cells from the recipient to line the structure. He has started preliminary tests in animals and estimated it would be another five years before the technique can be tried on humans.

While that may sound like science fiction, the techniques that led to the birth announced last week also sounded outlandish just years ago. "It makes what was formerly impossible possible," said Dr. Nannette Santoro, chair of [obstetrics and gynecology](#) at the University of Colorado. She was not involved in Brannstrom's research.

The happy couple in Sweden named their son "Vincent"—which means "to conquer"—to celebrate a victory over their difficult journey to

parenthood.

Welcoming The Associated Press into her home, the mother cradled her sleeping baby in a spotless, stylish kitchen where an errant pacifier on the counter was one of the only clues that a newborn was around.

She said she still could not believe she is a mother, after discovering at 15 that she had no womb and being told that she would never carry her own children. Now 36, she was one of nine women to receive a transplanted womb last year in a ground-breaking trial led by Brannstrom.

The mother spoke on condition the exact location of her home not be revealed; she would not be named because she does not want her son to become a target of publicity.

The mother said she never thought she might be the first to deliver a baby from a transplanted womb.

Her husband said the couple will be forever grateful to the 61-year-old woman who donated her uterus, the mother of one of his best friends. The woman—now the boy's godmother—made the offer after hearing about the difficulties the young couple was having in starting a family.

"What she did for us was so amazing and selfless that the words 'thank you' don't seem like enough," the father said.

These days, the new parents are busy marveling at their baby's expressive face and remarkably calm nature.

"He doesn't really scream, but he makes these funny little sounds," the mother said, comparing him to a kitten. Though his white wooden crib has a welcoming teddy bear and blankets, she said her son prefers to

sleep between his parents in their bed.

She and her husband said they haven't quite figured out how they will tell their son that he made medical history once he's older.

"We will show him all the articles that were written and tell him everything we went through to get him," she said. "Maybe he will be inspired to become a doctor."

The couple hope they can be an inspiration to others struggling with infertility— but that's not why they did it.

"Yes, we're the first to do this, but that's not the important thing," the mother said.

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