

# 'World first' for extreme premature baby dialysis in Poland

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An extremely premature Polish infant weighing just 820 grammes (1.8 pounds) has become the world's smallest and youngest patient to escape death thanks to an artificial kidney, according to the doctor who oversaw the treatment.

Born 15 weeks early, Kamil nearly died from organ failure a few days later and conventional methods used to keep [preterm babies](#) alive proved ineffective.

"He suffered grave edema" or water-retention causing swelling as his kidneys were unable to cope, doctor Wojciech Kowalik, head of the intensive care department of newborns at Legnica hospital in southwest Poland, told AFP Thursday.

Being hooked up to an [artificial kidney](#) was his only hope, but the procedure had never been succesful in such an extreme preterm case.

Similar treatment is usually applied to newborns weighing at least three kilogrammes. The treatment only worked for half of the 10 newborns who needed it at the Legnica hospital, according to Kowalik.

In Kamil's case, there was no alternative but to give it a go.

"For a baby weighing just 820 grammes, it's exceptional. We later learnt that he was the smallest in the world to survive thanks to this method. It has already been tried with children as small, but none survived,"

Kowalik added.

Kowalik said he had found no precedents in medical journals dealing with dialysis used on extremely [premature babies](#).

"It's a miracle," Kamil's father Adam Wawruch told AFP as the five-month-old baby weighed in at four kilogrammes before being released from hospital.

With public spending on healthcare in Poland still low by Western standards, not all Polish hospitals have [dialysis machines](#). Kamil had the good fortune to be born in one that did, thanks to funds raised by a popular annual telethon.

Founded in 1993, the Great Orchestra for Christmas Charity (WOSP) has raised \$160 million (150 million euros) for medical equipment to treat children. It paid for the dialysis machine used to save Kamil.

Known for his colourful outfits and outgoing personality, former TV journalist Jurek Owsiak is the force behind the telethon's success.

He visited the Legnica [hospital](#) to congratulate the doctors responsible for saving Kamil.

"Even if he were in New York, London or Paris instead of Legnica, Kamil would still be a patient at risk. Everyone would wonder whether they would have the courage to embark on this kind of therapy," Owsiak told AFP.

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