

S.African man with penis transplant to become father

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A South African man who received the world's first successful penis transplant is to become a father just months after undergoing surgery, his doctor said Friday.

Urologist Andre van der Merwe, who led the team that performed the operation, told AFP that the 21-year-old's girlfriend was pregnant.

"He said that she is about four months pregnant. They are very happy with it and we also very happy," said Van der Merwe, who is based at Stellenbosch University.

"We are happy that there were no complications and his penis is functioning well," he said.

There was nothing preventing the patient from having children because his testicles, where sperm is produced, were not affected.

Van der Merwe has previously admitted surprise at the speed of the man's recovery of sexual function however, saying the original goal was that "he would be fully functional at two years".

The man, whose identity has not been revealed, received his new penis from an organ donor in a nine-hour operation on December 11 at Tygerberg Hospital in Cape Town.

His own penis had to be amputated three years earlier after a botched

traditional circumcision.

The procedure, which often leads to disastrous infections and complications, is performed on boys and young men as a rite of passage to adulthood in some rural parts of South Africa.

"These young men don't have a penis so they have to sit to urinate, so the first objective is to make them be able to stand to urinate, like other men do," Van der Merwe told AFP.

"Secondly the objective is for them to have normal sexual intercourse if and when they want, so the second objective was met," he added.

"He's got a normal sensual penis. His sensation has recovered 100 percent at this stage, and he has got normal erections and he is sexually active.

"We can say that the third objective—to conceive a baby, or for him to be able to conceive with his partner—has (also) been met."

Van der Merwe said he had not examined the man's partner but had no reason to disbelieve that he had impregnated her as he was a "stable young man" and had been in a relationship with the woman for a number of years.

He said his team had been inundated with requests from men who have had similar amputations but could not take everyone.

"Right now we have about nine people on our programme," he said, pointing out that finding penis donors would be one of the challenges, as with any other organ.

"I don't think it would be easy but I believe people will now come

forward because of this positive case," he said.

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