

Intra-uterine surgery for at-risk fetuses

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Some anomalies in fetuses must be treated before delivery to prevent infant death or the risk of serious complications. Fortunately, fetuses can be operated in the womb, thanks to advanced technologies in ultrasound, fiber-optics, and laser surgery. The Fetal Therapy Center at CHU Sainte-Justine, the University of Montreal's affiliated children's hospital, specializes in treating "twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome" (TTTS), a serious disorder that occurs in identical twins who share a placenta but are carried in separate amniotic sacs. The anomaly causes an imbalance in the blood flow between the two infants, which left untreated, results in the death of the twins in 90% of cases.

CHU Sainte-Justine is one of the few hospitals in Canada and the world to practice laser fetal surgery for TTTS. In this regard, the researcher, obstetrician-gynecologist, and professor Francois Audibert and his team will present three papers on advances in fetal therapy practices at the currently being held 25th conference of the International Society of Ultrasound in Obstetrics and Gynecology, of which he is co-president. Specifically, they will discuss the results of 115 twin pregnancies treated with laser surgery, and the usefulness of echocardiography in predicting the development of fetuses and their chances of survival after the operation.

Dr. Audibert is a maternal fetal medicine specialist and researcher at CHU Sainte-Justine, assistant head of the Fetomaternal and Neonatal Pathologies Research Unit at the same institution, and professor at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Montreal. As part of the North American Fetal Therapy

Network (NaftNet), of which the CHU Sainte-Justine is a member, he will soon launch a trial comparing post-operative prognostic information with [laser surgery](#) outcomes, and a collaborative registry of complicated monochorionic twin pregnancies, the type of pregnancy affected by these procedures.

Provided by University of Montreal

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