

Conjoined Bhutanese twins separated in Australia surgery

November 9 2018



The girls were successfully separated after a six-hour operation at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne

Australian surgeons on Friday successfully separated 15-month-old Bhutanese twins, Nima and Dawa, who had been joined at the torso.

The team of more than 20 doctors and nurses spent six hours operating

on the pair, who shared a liver but no other major organs, to the relief of the surgeons.

"We didn't find surprises," said Joe Crameri, who led the surgery at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne.

"We are here earlier because there weren't any things inside the girls' tummies that we weren't really prepared for," he told reporters.

"We saw two young girls who were very ready for their surgery, who were able to cope very well with the surgery and are currently in our recovery doing very well," he told reporters.

He said the next 24 to 48 hours would be critical to their recovery, but was optimistic about the outcome.

Nima and Dawa, and their mother Bhumchu Zangmo, arrived in Australia a month ago with the help of an Australian charity, but doctors had delayed the surgery until Friday to ensure the twins were well-enough nourished to support the operation.

The girls were known to share a liver, but it was not known before Friday whether they also shared part of the bowel, which would have complicated the surgery.

Crameri said the girls' bowels were a bit intertwined they were not connected "in any major way".

A photograph released by the hospital showed four surgeons carefully lifting one of the twins away from the other on the operating table as the pair began their independent lives.

The girls and their mother spent the past month at a retreat outside

Melbourne run by the Children First Foundation, which raised money to bring the family to Australia for the surgery.

Elizabeth Lodge of the foundation told national broadcaster ABC before the surgery the twins already had their own personalities.

"Nima's the robust one. She tends to ... always be on the top, pulling rank, as we say, and Dawa's more placid," she said.

"It will be really interesting to see what will happen once the girls are separated," Lodge said, adding that the twins were "good mates".

Bhutan is a poor Himalayan kingdom where doctors did not have the expertise to separate the girls, who were joined from the chest to the waist.

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