

First Intestine Transplant from an Asystole Donor Carried Out in Spain and in the World

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The world's first multi-visceral transplant from a controlled asystole pediatric donation was performed at La Paz University Hospital in Madrid in 2022. The transplant was performed on a 13-month-old Emma, who had been diagnosed with intestinal failure when she was just one month old as her intestine was too short. Apart from the intestine, Emma also received a new liver, stomach, spleen and pancreas.

Though donation after circulatory death (DCD) is becoming more common in many parts of the world, what makes the intestine transplant exception is the difficulty in preserving an intestine from asystole donation due to the digestive organ's characteristics. This indicates that compared to other organs, the risk of rejection and the possibility of infection is higher in intestine transplant.

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"It is important to emphasise, as director of the ONT (National Transplant Organisation), what this transplant represents, what it represents for Emma, but also what this transplant will represent for many children in Spain and in other countries around the world because we are really talking about a milestone, it is the first intestinal transplant from an asystole donor to be carried out in Spain and in the world," said Beatriz Dominguez Gil.

Spain tops the list with highest deceased organ donation rate in the world. According to the Global Observatory on Donation and Transplantation, Spain contributed to nearly 5% of global organ donations in 2021, with DCD accounting for one-third of all donations.

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