

Chimpanzee Kidneys Transferred To Man

NEW ORLEANS (UPI)—Dockworker Jefferson Davis, with a pair of chimpanzee kidneys miraculously hooked into his ailing system, prepared to return home today for a new life owed to medical science.

Davis, 44, got his life-saving kidneys six weeks ago. He said today he feels "like a man who hasn't been sick a day in his life."

Drugs and X-rays were winning a second part of the battle, against the tendency of the human body to reject all foreign objects, including healthy kidneys. By medication, doctors said it appeared the transplant was working despite this tendency.

"At this time," Dr. Keith Reemtsma, a surgical spokesman, said, "it appears the rejection mechanism of the body has been overcome."

Second In History

Davis' operation was the second such surgery in history.

A 12-member team of Tulane University surgeons performed the operation Nov. 5. The first operation, performed on a 32-year-old unidentified woman, was on Oct. 8. The kidneys—in this case from a rhesus monkey—failed and had to be removed. She died two days later from her original kidney disease.

But in the woman's case, doctors said, anti-rejection drugs failed.

Reemtsma explained the drugs had been used in human-to-human kidney transplants.

He said there was no way of knowing how long the kidneys would function in Davis or when the patient's system might reject the transplanted organs.

Davis Feels Well

"I can't feel any better than that," Davis told newsmen Tuesday. "I feel better than I have for five years. I feel like a man who hasn't been sick a day in his life."

Asked why he agreed to the operation, he said the doctors told him "I couldn't live with what I've got. I had no choice. I want to outlive you all. I just want to survive."

Reemtsma said the main significance of the case was that the special drugs and X-ray treatments apparently overcame the body's natural tendency to reject foreign tissue.

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