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Pig organ transplants within 5 years

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11 September, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Pig organ transplants within 5 years

BNE: Scientists have said that animal organs could be transplanted to humans within five years. This could be the answer to a serious shortage of human organs and organ donors. There are five times more people waiting for organ transplants than there are available kidneys, hearts and lungs. Dr. Anthony Warrens, from London's Imperial College said in a press release*: "Although the idea of [animal organ transplants] is far from new, it is only in recent years that many of the potential...problems have been solved."

Pigs will be the most likely provider of organs. The size of pig organs is very similar to human organs. This increases the chance of the human body accepting pig organs. However, many hurdles still have to be overcome. There are unknown dangers of animal viruses crossing over and infecting humans. Dr. Warrens is positive, saying: "Although we can't say there is absolutely no danger of cross infection, I believe that in the future we will be able to deal with many of the problems, reducing any potential risk."

* <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/P6812.htm>

WARM-UPS

1. DONATIONS: Do you want your organs to be used after you die? Talk with your partner(s) about whether you would allow any of the following:

- Organ donation for transplants
- Whole body donation for medical research
- Whole body donation to medical schools for medical students
- Whole body donation to artists to be transformed into works of art

2. ANIMAL PARTS: In pairs / groups, decide which of the following are OK with you. Which should humans never do? Which are OK for humans to do if they choose to?

- Eat meat from animals
- Use medicine produced from animals
- Have a transplanted pig heart
- Have a blood transfusion from modified animal blood
- Sheep eye transplants
- Skin grafts from animals

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Scientists / transplants / pig organs / organ donors / kidneys / hearts / lungs / dangers / viruses / ethics / hurdles / animal organ transplants / pigs for food

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. PIGS: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with pigs. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. OPINIONS: Do you agree with these opinions on pig organ transplants? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- a. If pig organs save lives, it's a good thing.
- b. The idea of pig organ transplants is worse than the idea of cloning.
- c. We cannot change who we are. We will become half-human, half-pig.
- d. It's too dangerous. No one knows what kind of viruses will spread.
- e. God created man in his own image, not in a pig's image.
- f. This is a wonderfully exciting development in medical research.
- g. I feel sorry for pigs. More will die now.
- h. It's not right to use animals in this way.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. Pig organs could be transplanted into humans within five years. | T / F |
| b. There is not yet a shortage of human organs. | T / F |
| c. There are more human organs than people waiting for organs. | T / F |
| d. The idea of transplanting animal organs is very new. | T / F |
| e. Pigs will be used because their blood is very similar to human blood. | T / F |
| f. Pig organs and human organs are similar in size. | T / F |
| g. A scientist said there is no danger of viruses crossing over to humans. | T / F |
| h. A scientist is confident all problems will be solved. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| a. within | obstacles |
| b. answer | media |
| c. press | probability |
| d. potential | manage |
| e. solved | inside |
| f. provider | possible |
| g. chance | source |
| h. hurdles | solution |
| i. deal with | decreasing |
| j. reducing | answered |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| a. animal organs could be transplanted | waiting for organ transplants |
| b. the answer to a serious | over and infecting humans |
| c. five times more people | be overcome |
| d. animal | shortage of human organs |
| e. many of the potential problems | human body accepting pig organs |
| f. Pigs will be the most likely | organ transplants |
| g. increases the chance of the | into humans within five years |
| h. many hurdles still have to | with many of the problems |
| i. animal viruses crossing | have been solved |
| j. we will be able to deal | provider of organs |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Pig organ transplants within 5 years

BNE: Scientists have said that animal organs could be transplanted to humans _____ five years. This could be the _____ to a serious shortage of human organs and organ _____. There are five times more people _____ for organ transplants than there are _____ kidneys, hearts and lungs. Dr. Anthony Warrens, from London's Imperial College said in a press _____: "Although the idea of [animal organ transplants] is _____ from new, it is only in recent years that many of the potential...problems have been _____."

available

donors

within

solved

waiting

far

answer

release

Pigs will be the most _____ provider of organs. The size of pig organs is very similar to human organs. This _____ the chance of the human body _____ pig organs. However, many _____ still have to be overcome. There are unknown _____ of animal viruses crossing over and _____ humans. Dr. Warrens is positive, saying: "Although we can't say there is _____ no danger of cross infection, I believe that in the future we will be able to _____ with many of the problems, reducing any potential risk."

dangers

increases

absolutely

hurdles

likely

accepting

deal

infecting

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'pig'** and **'organ'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "PIG ORGAN TRANSPLANTS" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about pig organs and transplants into humans.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- organs
- shortage
- five times
- press
- far from new
- solved
- provider
- chance
- hurdles
- crossing over
- infection
- deal with

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What did you think when you read this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What do you think about animal organ transplants?
- d. Would you accept a pig heart if it was the only way to keep you alive?
- e. What problems can you see with animal organ transplants?
- f. What other ways are there to deal with organ shortages?
- g. Would you feel you were not fully human if you had a pig heart?
- h. Would you feel strange talking to someone who had a pig heart?
- i. Do you think new diseases might spread to humans from pigs?
- j. What other animals might be used for organ transplants?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Which is stranger to you, pig organ transplants or cloning?
- d. Do you think human genes will change if people have animal organs?
- e. Do you think eating pigs and transplanting their organs are the same?
- f. Should the public vote on medical decisions like this?
- g. What would happen to people with pig hearts if they suddenly developed unknown and dangerous diseases?
- h. What do you think about sheep eye transplants?
- i. Are their religious concerns regarding animal organ transplants?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

ROLE PLAY: This role play is to discuss whether or not animal organ transplants should become an accepted part of medical practice. Team up with classmates who have the same role as you. Develop your roles and discuss ideas and “strategies” before the role play begins.

Introduce yourself to the other role players.

Role A – Scientist A

You are horrified at the thought of animal organ transplants. You think all kinds of new and dangerous diseases will develop. Humans will be changed forever. The human species will become weaker and get unknown diseases. It is far too risky to transplant pig organs.

THINK OF MORE REASONS AGAINST ANIMAL ORGAN TRANSPLANTS.

Role B – Scientist B

You think animal organ transplants is the greatest medical development in 100 years. It will help save millions of lives, help blind people see and improve many other things. Science can stop diseases from crossing over to humans. Humans will always be human.

THINK OF MORE REASONS FOR ANIMAL ORGAN TRANSPLANTS.

Role C – Patient

You have a serious heart problem. If you do not have a heart transplant in the next six months, you will die. You are prepared to test a pig heart. It may mean you have a longer life and possibly help millions of others who are on organ donation waiting lists.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD TRY A PIG HEART.

Role D – Concerned citizen

You are very worried about organs from animals being transplanted into humans. You think the human species will change, perhaps become weaker and then become extinct. You think it is ridiculous to take such a risk. You believe God did not intend us to be half human.

THINK OF MORE REASONS AGAINST ANIMAL ORGAN TRANSPLANTS.

Change roles and repeat the role play. Comment in groups about the differences between the two role plays.

In pairs / groups, discuss whether you really believe in what you said while you were in your roles.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Pig organ transplants within 5 years

BNE: Scientists have said that animal organs could be transplanted to _____ within five years. This could be the answer to a serious _____ of human organs and organ donors. There are five times more people waiting for organ transplants than there are _____ kidneys, hearts and lungs. Dr. Anthony Warrens, from London's Imperial College said in a press _____: "Although the idea of [animal organ transplants] is _____, it is only in recent years that many of the potential...problems have been _____."

Pigs will be the most likely _____ of organs. The size of pig organs is very similar to human organs. This increases the _____ of the human body accepting pig organs. However, many hurdles still have to be _____. There are unknown dangers of animal _____ crossing over and infecting humans. Dr. Warrens is positive, saying: "Although we can't say there is absolutely no _____ of cross infection, I believe that in the future we will be able to deal with many of the problems, reducing any _____ risk."

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on animal organ transplants (xenotransplantation). Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. PROS AND CONS: Make a poster showing the pros and cons of transplanting animal organs into humans. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all include similar things? Talk about the pros and cons.

4. ARTICLE: Write a newspaper report about a major health alert occurring with an animal organ transplant patient. Read your article to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar stories?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. F c. F d. F e. F f. T g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| a. within | inside |
| b. answer | solution |
| c. press | media |
| d. potential | possible |
| e. solved | answered |
| f. provider | source |
| g. chance | probability |
| h. hurdles | obstacles |
| i. deal with | manage |
| j. reducing | decreasing |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| a. animal organs could be transplanted | into humans within five years |
| b. the answer to a serious | shortage of human organs |
| c. five times more people | waiting for organ transplants |
| d. animal | organ transplants |
| e. many of the potential problems | have been solved |
| f. Pigs will be the most likely | provider of organs |
| g. increases the chance of the | human body accepting pig organs |
| h. many hurdles still have to | be overcome |
| i. animal viruses crossing | over and infecting humans |
| j. we will be able to deal | with many of the problems |

GAP FILL:

Pig organ transplants within 5 years

BNE: Scientists have said that animal organs could be transplanted to humans **within** five years. This could be the **answer** to a serious shortage of human organs and organ **donors**. There are five times more people **waiting** for organ transplants than there are **available** kidneys, hearts and lungs. Dr. Anthony Warrens, from London's Imperial College said in a press **release**: "Although the idea of [animal organ transplants] is **far** from new, it is only in recent years that many of the potential...problems have been **solved**."

Pigs will be the most **likely** provider of organs. The **size** of pig organs is very similar to human organs. This **increases** the chance of the human body **accepting** pig organs. However, many **hurdles** still have to be overcome. There are unknown **dangers** of animal viruses crossing over and **infecting** humans. Dr. Warrens is positive, saying: "Although we can't say there is **absolutely** no danger of cross infection, I believe that in the future we will be able to **deal** with many of the problems, reducing any potential risk."