

## Pigs' organs for human transplant possible in a decade

Organs of pigs suitable for transplanting into humans could be ready in a decade. Pigs genetically modified for the purpose of research will be ready in a year, say researchers.

The experiments are being conducted by Robert Winston of Imperial College, London, and his collaborator, Carol Readhead, of the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena.

Winston told The Times that "organs that might be transplantable" could be ready "within two to three years" and on the basis that the research went smoothly they would be fully licensed and tested in as little as 10 years.

Readhead said kidneys are likely to be the first pig organs that researchers attempt to transplant into a sick human. "The kidney is a really good candidate," she said. "There's a huge shortage and it would make a big difference."

A pig weighing 100 kg - those reared for meat weigh four times that much - is being reared for purpose of initial research. Later, the team expects to have a herd of 50 pigs to be kept as breeding stock to provide organs "to order".

Pigs are regarded as ideal for animal-to-human transplants, xenotransplantation, and other research because of the similarity in the physiological make-up and because they get many of the same diseases, such as diabetes.

The research may be moved to the US as in Britain and the European Union, Winston's team has been banned from mating and producing offspring from the transgenic pigs.

Transgenic pigs are those which have been injected with genes to "humanise" their organs so that they are not rejected by the human body after transplants.

Patients who received pig organs would have to take immune suppressant drugs for the rest of their lives, but no more than those who received organ transplants from other people.

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