

First person to receive a genetically modified pig kidney transplant dies nearly 2 months later

Synopsis

Richard Slayman, 62, passed away two months after a groundbreaking genetically modified pig kidney transplant at Massachusetts General Hospital, offering hope to kidney patients. Surgeons aimed for a two-year kidney lifespan in the Weymouth, Massachusetts man following dialysis complications.



Melissa Mattola-Kiatos, RN, nursing practice specialist, removes the pig kidney from its box to prepare for transplantation at Massachusetts General Hospital, March 16, 2024, in Boston. Richard "Rick" Slayman, the first recipient of a genetically modified pig kidney transplant, has died nearly two months after he underwent the procedure, his family and the hospital that performed the surgery said Saturday, May 11.

The first recipient of a genetically modified [pig kidney transplant](#) has died nearly two months after he underwent the procedure, his family and the hospital that performed the surgery said Saturday.

[Richard "Rick" Slayman](#) had the [transplant](#) at [Massachusetts General Hospital](#) in March at the age of 62. [Surgeons](#) said they believed the [pig kidney](#) would last for at least two years.

The transplant team at Massachusetts General Hospital said in a statement it was deeply saddened by Slayman's passing and offered condolences to his family. They said they didn't have any indication that he died as a result of the transplant.

The Weymouth, Massachusetts, man was the first living person to have the procedure. Previously pig kidneys had been

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within months.

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Slayman had a kidney transplant at the hospital in 2018, but he had to go back on [dialysis](#) last year when it showed signs

of failure. When dialysis complications arose requiring frequent procedures, his doctors suggested a pig kidney transplant.

In a statement, Slayman's family thanked his doctors.

"Their enormous efforts leading the [xenotransplant](#) gave our family seven more weeks with Rick, and our memories made during that time will remain in our minds and hearts," the statement said.

They said Slayman underwent the surgery in part to provide [hope](#) for the thousands of people who need a transplant to survive.

"Rick accomplished that goal and his hope and optimism will endure forever," the statement said.

[Xenotransplantation](#) refers to healing human patients with cells, tissues or organs from animals. Such efforts long failed because the human immune system immediately destroyed foreign animal tissue. Recent attempts have involved pigs that have been modified so their organs are more humanlike.

More than 100,000 people are on the national waiting list for a transplant, most of them kidney patients, and thousands die every year before their turn comes.

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