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Woman has first face transplant

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1 December, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Woman has first face transplant

Pioneering surgeons in France have carried out the world's first partial face transplant. In the groundbreaking operation, doctors replaced the nose, lips and chin of a 38-year-old woman who was savaged and disfigured by a dog in May. Doctors say the woman is in "excellent" condition and that the transplanted organs look "normal". The procedure was headed by Doctor Jean-Michel Dubernard, the surgeon who carried out the world's first hand transplant in 1998. He remained tight-lipped about the details and success of the operation and refused to give details to journalists eager for news of the woman's condition and the chances of success. He did say that his patient wishes to remain anonymous. The organs were taken from a brain-dead woman, with her family's consent.

Experts in facial reconstruction said the mouth and nose are the most difficult parts of the face to transplant. In the past, surgeons have successfully performed scalp and ear transplants, but facial injuries, such as those the woman suffered, have up until now been impossible to repair. If this surgery proves successful, it will be a major breakthrough in reconstructive surgery for the actual face. The operation entails removing skin and facial muscles from the donor and attaching them to the recipient's face by reconnecting the tissue. The appearance of the newly reconstructed face will be somewhere between the original face and that of the organ donor's. The woman will have to wait to see if her body's immune system will accept or reject the new organs.

WARM-UPS

1. MY FACE: In pairs / groups, talk about your face. How happy are you with it? Which parts do you like? Which parts would you like to change? What kinds of changes would you like to make? Whose nose, lips, chin, etc. would you like?

2. TRANSPLANTS: Doctors are able to transplant more and more parts of our body. With your partner(s), discuss whether you would have any of the transplants below. How would each transplant affect your life?

- Nose
- Full face
- Hair
- Eyes
- Heart
- Brain
- Hand
- Lung

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

Pioneers / faces / transplants / noses / lips / chins / organs / being tight-lipped / journalists / facial injuries / muscles / reconstructive surgery / organ donation

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

4. COMMENTS ON FACE TRANSPLANTS: What do you think of these comments on face transplants? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- a. Great. They will transform the lives of people with disfigured faces.
- b. This kind of thing should never be done for cosmetic reasons.
- c. It's OK as long as patients undergo extensive counseling.
- d. Scary – Why would anyone want to look like someone else?
- e. There are too many unknown psychological consequences here.
- f. Face transplants should only go ahead if they are life saving.
- g. The donor's parents would be upset at seeing their child's face on someone else.
- h. This could lead to all kinds of criminal activities and disguises.

5. TRANSPLANT: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "transplant". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. QUICK DEBATE: Have a quick debate with your partner about facial transplants. Students A think they are ethically and morally unsound, Students B think they could help many people and are a fantastic idea .

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Surgeons have transplanted the whole of a woman's face. | T / F |
| b. The woman broke her nose and skull on the ground. | T / F |
| c. The same surgeon performed a hand transplant a while back. | T / F |
| d. The organ donor's family tried to stop the operation. | T / F |
| e. Experts say eyes are the most difficult facial features to transplant. | T / F |
| f. Doctors have successfully transplanted ears and scalps in the past. | T / F |
| g. The new face will be almost identical to the donor's face. | T / F |
| h. The woman's immune system may reject the new organs. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| a. groundbreaking | mauled |
| b. savaged | spurn |
| c. tight-lipped | specialists |
| d. eager | look |
| e. consent | revolutionary |
| f. experts | deformations |
| g. injuries | silent |
| h. entails | blessing |
| i. appearance | necessitates |
| j. reject | hankering |

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

- | | |
|---|---|
| a. surgeons in France have carried out | to remain anonymous |
| b. a 38-year-old woman who was | about the details |
| c. Doctors say the woman is | the world's first partial face transplant |
| d. He remained tight-lipped | in reconstructive surgery |
| e. his patient wishes | scalp and ear transplants |
| f. surgeons have successfully performed | removing skin and facial muscles |
| g. a major breakthrough | in "excellent" condition |
| h. The operation entails | accept or reject the new organs |
| i. attaching them to | savaged and disfigured by a dog |
| j. if her body's immune system will | the recipient's face |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

Woman has first face transplant

_____ surgeons in France have carried out the world's first _____ face transplant. In the groundbreaking operation, doctors replaced the nose, lips and chin of a 38-year-old woman who was savaged and _____ by a dog in May. Doctors say the woman is in "excellent" condition and that the transplanted _____ look "normal". The procedure was headed by Doctor Jean-Michel Dubernard, the surgeon who carried out the world's first hand transplant in 1998. He remained _____ about the details and success of the operation and refused to give details to journalists _____ for news of the woman's condition and the chances of success. He did say that his patient wishes to remain _____. The organs were taken from a brain-dead woman, with her family's _____.

eager
disfigured
tight-lipped
pioneering
consent
partial
organs
anonymous

_____ in facial reconstruction said the mouth and nose are the most difficult parts of the face to transplant. In the past, surgeons have successfully performed _____ and ear transplants, but facial injuries, such as those the woman suffered, have up until now been impossible to _____. If this surgery proves successful, it will be a _____ breakthrough in reconstructive surgery for the actual face. The operation entails removing skin and facial _____ from the donor and attaching them to the recipient's face by reconnecting the tissue. The appearance of the _____ reconstructed face will be _____ between the original face and that of the organ donor's. The woman will have to wait to see if her body's _____ system will accept or reject the new organs.

newly
major
repair
immune
experts
somewhere
scalp
muscles

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Woman has first face transplant

Pioneering surgeons in France have carried out the world's first _____ face transplant. In the groundbreaking operation, doctors replaced the nose, lips and chin of a 38-year-old woman who was _____ and disfigured by a dog in May. Doctors say the woman is in "excellent" condition and that the transplanted organs look "normal". The procedure was _____ by Doctor Jean-Michel Dubernard, the surgeon who _____ out the world's first hand transplant in 1998. He remained _____ - _____ about the details and success of the operation and refused to give details to journalists _____ for news of the woman's condition and the chances of success. He did say that his patient wishes to remain anonymous. The organs were taken from a brain-dead woman, with her family's _____.

Experts in facial reconstruction said the mouth and nose are the most difficult parts of the face to transplant. In the past, surgeons have successfully performed _____ and ear transplants, but facial injuries, such as those the woman _____, have up until now been impossible to repair. If this surgery proves successful, it will be a major breakthrough in reconstructive surgery for the actual face. The operation _____ removing skin and facial muscles from the donor and attaching them to the _____ face by reconnecting the tissue. The appearance of the newly reconstructed face will be somewhere between the original face _____ organ donor's. The woman will have to wait to see if her body's _____ system will accept or reject the new organs.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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 activity. 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 "FACE TRANSPLANT" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about face transplants and the ethics surrounding them.

- 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:

- partial
- savaged
- normal
- hand
- eager
- consent
- experts
- scalp
- if
- tissue
- somewhere
- immune

DISCUSSION

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

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Are you happy for the woman in the article?
- c. Would you have tried a face transplant in the same circumstances?
- d. What are the dangers if the transplant doesn't work?
- e. Even if it is successful, the woman will be on drugs forever and will be at an increased risk of getting cancer. Is the operation worth it?
- f. What are ethical considerations of face transplants?
- g. Do you think someone who has a face transplant is a different person after?
- h. How do you think colleagues, family, friends, neighbors, etc. might react to seeing someone they know with a completely different face?
- i. What would you say to someone you love if they told you they were going to have a face transplant?
- j. In the future, there might be things like "order-made faces". What do you think of this?

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. Do you think this operation is just cosmetic surgery taken a step further?
- d. How do you think the family of the donor will feel when they see their daughter's nose, lips and chin on someone else?
- e. What kind of counseling do you think people need to receive before they have a face transplant?
- f. How do you think it would feel to look in the mirror after a face transplant and see a different person?
- g. Do you think face transplants can make people look better or do you think there might be unknown problems?
- h. Do you think criminals will find a way of using transplants in the future?
- i. Would you have a face transplant if you could have the face of a beautiful or handsome actor?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

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

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

FACE TRANSPLANT COUNSELOR: You are an expert face transplant counselor. You must make a guidebook for other counselors. With the other expert face counselors, think of the potential problems of face transplants for the people in the table below. Think of some suggested solutions to these problems.

	POTENTIAL PROBLEMS	SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS
The person having the transplant		
The donor's family		
The partner of the patient		
The children of the patient		
The parents of the patient		
The colleagues of the patient		

- Change partners and compare and share your ideas.
- Give each other feedback on how to improve on the ideas.
- Give presentations on your ideas to other groups / the rest of the class.
- In pairs / groups, discuss the content and quality of the presentations and vote on the one you thought was best.
- Talk about the ethics of facial transplants. What kind of things would you need to consider before having one?
- Take a class vote on whether face transplants are OK.

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 this groundbreaking operation. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. PROS AND CONS: Make a poster outlining the pros and cons of face transplants. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all think of similar things?

4. THE NEW ME: You've just had a face transplant. Three days ago you took the bandages off your face and looked in the mirror for the first time. What did you see? Who did you see? Write a diary / journal entry explaining your feelings before and after the bandages came off. What are your feelings now? Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| a. groundbreaking | revolutionary |
| b. savaged | mauled |
| c. tight-lipped | silent |
| d. eager | hankering |
| e. consent | blessing |
| f. experts | specialists |
| g. injuries | impairments |
| h. entails | necessitates |
| i. appearance | look |
| j. reject | spurn |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|---|
| a. surgeons in France have carried out | the world's first partial face transplant |
| b. a 38-year-old woman who was | savaged and disfigured by a dog |
| c. Doctors say the woman is | in "excellent" condition |
| d. He remained tight-lipped | about the details |
| e. his patient wishes | to remain anonymous |
| f. surgeons have successfully performed | scalp and ear transplants |
| g. a major breakthrough | in reconstructive surgery |
| h. The operation entails | removing skin and facial muscles |
| i. attaching them to | the recipient's face |
| j. if her body's immune system will | accept or reject the new organs |

GAP FILL:

Woman has first face transplant

Pioneering surgeons in France have carried out the world's first **partial** face transplant. In the groundbreaking operation, doctors replaced the nose, lips and chin of a 38-year-old woman who was savaged and **disfigured** by a dog in May. Doctors say the woman is in "excellent" condition and that the transplanted **organs** look "normal". The procedure was headed by Doctor Jean-Michel Dubernard, the surgeon who carried out the world's first hand transplant in 1998. He remained **tight-lipped** about the details and success of the operation and refused to give details to journalists **eager** for news of the woman's condition and the chances of success. He did say that his patient wishes to remain **anonymous**. The organs were taken from a brain-dead woman, with her family's **consent**.

Experts in facial reconstruction said the mouth and nose are the most difficult parts of the face to transplant. In the past, surgeons have successfully performed **scalp** and ear transplants, but facial injuries, such as those the woman suffered, have up until now been impossible to **repair**. If this surgery proves successful, it will be a **major** breakthrough in reconstructive surgery for the actual face. The operation entails removing skin and facial **muscles** from the donor and attaching them to the recipient's face by reconnecting the tissue. The appearance of the **newly** reconstructed face will be **somewhere** between the original face and that of the organ donor's. The woman will have to wait to see if her body's **immune** system will accept or reject the new organs.