Renewed Hope For Organ Transplants

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People with HIV and coexisting medical conditions have a higher need of organ transplants, but the good news is that those who do receive transplants often thrive. Hospitals, however, have varying criteria for approving the procedure. New York-Presbyterian considered HIV an “absolute contraindication” for the lung surgery that Lamont Valentin, a 29-year-old born with HIV, needed as a result of childhood AIDS-related pulmonary infections. Sadly, he died December 3 on a New York City bus on the way home from a doctor’s appointment. “Lamont wasn’t evaluated as a possible lung transplant candidate,” wrote Treatment Action Group’s Tim Horn in a POZ blog, “and, as a result, died without even having the luxury of being placed onto the all-too-long waiting list for a possible match.” To ensure Lamont—who was a husband and father—didn’t die in vain, activists have rallied hospitals to reconsider their approval processes for people with HIV.

In other news: It is illegal in the United States for an HIV-positive person to donate an organ to another positive person. That may change now that Obama signed the HIV Organ Policy Equity (HOPE) Act. The new law allows such transplants for research purposes only; the hope is that newfound data will ultimately lift the ban.

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