HIV-Positive Surgeon Should Return to Work

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Israel’s Ministry of Health has recommended that an HIV-positive heart surgeon be allowed to return to work without any restrictions and should not be required to disclose his status to prospective patients, Reuters reports.

According to the article, the surgeon, who was diagnosed with the virus in January 2007, had performed about 150 operations annually within his two decades in practice. Once the Ministry of Health was aware of his diagnosis, it directed all hospitals that employed the doctor to offer HIV tests to every patient he operated on since 1997. Out of a total 1,669 patients, 545 were available and agreed to be tested; all tested negative for HIV.

The surgeon’s case was reported in the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, a publication of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The report states that this proves that the risk of transmitting HIV from surgeon to patient is very low and concludes that public health groups should update guidelines for HIV-positive workers who perform invasive procedures.

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