

Baboon bone marrow transplant appears to have failed AIDS patient

SAN FRANCISCO — Baboon bone marrow implanted in an AIDS patient to boost his failing immune system has apparently failed to work, doctors said Wednesday.

But the AIDS patient, 38-year-old Jeff Getty, is doing "surprisingly well," perhaps due to chemotherapy, said Dr. Steven Deeks, who performed the transplant at San Francisco General Hospital on Dec. 14.

Getty, a former University of California policy analyst who turned into an AIDS activist when he discovered he had the disease, said from his Oakland home that he had always known the chances of success were not good.

"When I came into this, I rolled the dice," he said. "I didn't even know if I was going to live through the thing. Now I'm looking forward to a long summer of sailing."

Bone marrow produces the body's immune system, and the baboon cells were transplanted into Getty because the animals do not become infected with AIDS for reasons biologists still don't understand.

Previous experiments with baboon bone marrow transplants had failed because the bodies of the human patients rejected the foreign cells.

The treatment Getty received was designed by Dr. Suzanne Ildstad at University of Pittsburgh Medical

She added special facilitator cells to baboon bone marrow stem cells in hopes it would help the cells engraft into Getty's system and begin producing disease-fighting baboon immune system cells.

But after two months, doctors have failed to find any clear signs of baboon cells, Deeks said.

"At this point in time the results are inconclusive, but suggest that if there are any cells present, there aren't very many of them," Deeks said.

Despite the apparent failure, Getty said he is feeling well.

"My immune system is doing wonderfully," he said.

"My immune cell numbers are back to where they were in 1992, and I actually feel better than I did when I went into the hospital."

Getty said doctors believe the radiation and chemotherapy prior to the transplant may be responsible for a sharp decrease in the virus' presence in his body.

Deeks said Getty's surprising improvement may be as important as the experiment itself.

"There are some hints as to why Jeff is doing better, and this will open up new areas of research," he said, but refused to be more specific.

Getty and Deeks emphasized that the procedure was successful in the only area approved by the FDA —

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STEVEN DEEKS
AIDS patient's doctor

showing that the baboon bone marrow transplant into a human being was safe.

Critics had objected to the baboon-to-human transplant because of fears that a baboon disease could be unleashed on the population through the transplant process. Deeks said the transplant proved that so far, the fears are unfounded.

"There are no signs of any baboon viruses in Jeff, but we will continue to monitor him," Deeks said.

Deeks said he intended to repeat the transplant with knowledge gained from Getty's experience. The engraftment may have failed because Getty's immune system was not sufficiently suppressed before the transplant, he said.

Report on plane crash notes mechanical failure

ENSENADA, Mexico — Mechanical failure that caused a fire is to blame for the crash of a small plane into a mountainside, killing all eight people aboard, according to a preliminary report by the Mexican Communications and Transportation Department.

Federal officials were on the scene of Tuesday's crash and will release a final report when they complete their investigation, a ministry spokeswoman, Rosalba Paulin, said in Mexico City on Wednesday.

Among the victims was Leobardo Roa Helmecke, a 42-year-old former state congressman and former state president of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party. At the time of his death, he was state director of the National Housing Institute.

"This has caused a great deal of consternation in Baja California, especially here in Mexicali, because he was from here. He was very well-known," said Francisco Lizarraga,

information chief of the daily newspaper, Voz de la Frontera, in the state capital of Mexicali.

The other victims were identified by police as pilot Selim Weber Hernandez, co-pilot Francisco Delgado Arreola; National Housing Institute employees Jesus Plascencia Posada, Sergio Alberto Acero, Arturo Paz Alvarez and Ines Sanchez Ayala; and the leading stockholder of the company Geo Provi, Manuel Esparza Leon.

Officials from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and officials from Cessna Aircraft Co., maker of the twin-turbine airplane, were also expected to arrive here Wednesday to participate in the investigation, Lizarraga said.

Rescue workers recovered the bodies from the crash site, and wreckage was found spread across the area, said police 2nd Lt. Javier Munoz, of the nearby town of El Maneadero.

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Open House



Antelope Valley Major Investment Study

to assess community needs and to identify opportunities within our original neighborhoods

- ◆ How effective are current stormwater and transportation systems?
- ◆ What are the needs of the neighborhoods in the study area?

A focus on stormwater, transportation, and community revitalization.
The overall study area is between 10th and 22nd Streets,
Cornhusker Highway, and "K" and "L" Streets

TWO DATES AND LOCATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM:

Tuesday, February 13
5 to 9 p.m.
Elliott Elementary School
225 S. 25 Street

Parking Available in OfficeMax parking lot, southwest corner

Wednesday, February 14
5 to 9 p.m.
Malone Community Center
2032 U Street

Parking Available in the Beadle Center Parking lot

Stations will provide information and staff will be available to discuss your concerns

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 474-6311, Ext. 750

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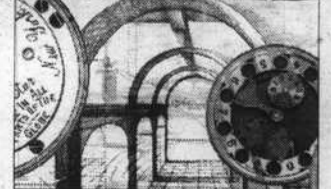
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