

Face Transplantation: Someone Else's Face in the Mirror

In November of 2005, Isabelle Dinoir became the first recipient of an experimental procedure -- a face transplantation. Since that time, 11 other face transplantations have been performed and questions of identity, public acceptance and innovative surgery still remain.

Tuesday, August 24, 2010

First Face Transplantation -- Isabelle Dinoir

In late November 2005 the first face transplantation was performed on a woman whose mid and lower face had been removed by a pet dog. While she slept Isabelle Dinoir's beloved pet pawed at her face, perhaps in an attempt to wake her from a drug induced slumber. Overcome by a difficult week, Isabelle had taken the drugs to help her to rest. Overdosed and unconscious she lay unaware as her dog scratched and nibbled at her face. In the morning Isabelle woke and tried to light a cigarette. Sensing her mouth to be changed and seeing blood on the floor, she made her way to the mirror and witnessed her facial trauma. Horrified she called her family who arrived and brought her to the hospital in Amiens, France where they reported that her nose, cheeks, lips and portions of her chin were gone, forever gouged off of her face.

Six months later, Isabelle underwent a historic face transplant, one that later face recipients would gratefully refer to as ground breaking and the path to their own facial repair. Isabelle's surgeons, most notably Drs. Dubernard and Devauchelle performed the elaborate operation using tissue donated from a woman who died from a cerebral hemorrhage (not suicide which is the usually cited cause of death for this donor). Isabelle's consent form is a remarkable and historic document warning her of the dangers of taking a lifetime of immunosuppressant drugs to keep the face from rejecting, of how the surgery itself will progress, and even the necessity of using make-up to cover her suture marks. Unique to her consent form is a warning of how her life will change after the surgery by being the first face transplant recipient and provides hints that there may be a high degree of related social interest and media attention -- two side effects that would prove challenging for the dignified and reserved Isabelle. At the end of the consent document, gathered on the day before her surgery, sits Isabelle's signature, her remarkable consent to undergo this innovative procedure to replace her face, the center of her identity and selfhood and begin a new chapter in the history of allotransplantation.

Posted by Carla Bluhm, Ph.D. at 8:40 AM

0

0 comments:

Post a Comment

Followers

Join this site
with Google Friend Connect

Members (2)



Already a member? [Sign in](#)

Blog Archive

- ▶ 2011 (1)
- ▼ 2010 (4)
 - ▶ October (1)
 - ▼ August (2)
 - First Face Transplantation -- Isabelle Dinoir
 - Boston Med -- Bohdan Pomahac
- ▶ July (1)

Face Transplant Scholar

Carla Bluhm, Ph.D.
College of Coastal Georgia,
Brunswick, GA, United States

Dr. Bluhm is the co-author with Nathan Clendenin of the first book published on face transplantation called "Someone Else's Face in the Mirror: Identity and the New Science of Face Transplants" (Praeger Publishers, 2009).

[View my complete profile](#)



Comment as:

[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)