

Lab-grown body organs are transplanted

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The first human recipients of laboratory-grown organs have been reported at Wake Forest University School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Dr. Antony Atala, director of the Institute for Regenerative Medicine at Wake Forest, says he and his team have had long-term success in children and teenagers who received bladders grown from their own cells.

"This is one small step in our ability to go forward in replacing damaged tissues and organs," said Atala, who is now working to grow 20 different tissues and organs, including blood vessels and hearts, in the laboratory.

The engineered bladders were grown from the patients' own cells, so there is no risk of rejection, said Atala, who reported the bladders showed improved function over time -- with some patients being followed for more than seven years.

"It is rewarding when you can see the improved quality of life in these patients," said Atala.

The research is detailed in *The Lancet*.

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