

## Should Pig Hearts Be Used In Transplantations?

For decades there has been a shortage in suitable donor organs being available. Recently, the question of whether pig hearts should be used in humans has caused strong debate. Both sides of the argument present strong cases and the merits of these will be discussed.

Supporters of pig-heart transplants argue that pig hearts should be used because it would solve the problem of the lack of donors. In addition, they say that because the majority of people see no problem using pigs for meat, it can be argued there is no moral difference to using their bodies for medicinal problems. They also claim that because pig hearts can be genetically altered, they are safe for use in transplantation. Furthermore, if the initial operations were found to be successful, then this would bring hope to the thousands of patients waiting for healthy organs.

Critics of the idea of pig-heart transplants argue if the transplant operation were unsuccessful, then it could lead to the patient's immediate death. They say most people would not accept animals such as dogs or cats being used, as it would be extremely controversial and unpopular. Furthermore, many animal-rights campaigners state that pig hearts could contain harmful bacteria or viruses, which could result in the recipient rapidly becoming extremely ill. Moreover, some activists state that they would bring legal action against any hospital that carried out operations on the grounds of animal cruelty.

The issue of whether pig hearts should be used for human transplantation is complex with there being strong arguments on both sides. On balance, there are more compelling arguments against them being carried out. This is because there are ethical issues with breeding animals for xenotransplantation, the risks of rejection by the body are high, and there are alternative ways that more human heart donors could be made available.