



Around one in 7,000 women are born without a womb, while others lose their womb to cancer.

Doctors have been granted approval to carry out womb transplant. 10 operations will take place as part of a clinical trial.

Dr. [Jane Macdougall](#), consultant in reproductive medicine and surgery and gynaecologist at The Rosie Maternity Hospital was on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire this morning.

To listen to Jane, visit the [BBC Radio Cambridgeshire](#) website. Interview starts at 02:47:50.

## **Interview**

**"So you're on the front line advising Cambridgeshire patients on this procedure, tell us how it works?"**

"Well, primarily it will be patients who are born without a womb or they may have lost their [uterus](#), but they still have their [ovaries](#) so what the team in London plan to do is to first of all collect their eggs and fertilise them, create embryos and then after that the women will go forward for the transplant program."

**"And how common of an issue is this?"**

"It's quite rare for women to be born without a womb but it is something that we see a number of patients for and advise them by our team in Addenbrooke's."

**"And how complicated is this procedure?"**

"I'm not actually involved in the transplant program itself but obviously it would require removing the womb, I think they are going to use cadavers for renal transplants and other transplants and they have to remove the womb and then put it into the woman that is receiving it."

**"In Sweden I think there was a womb that was donated by the friend of the recipient but the British teen will use organs from the deceased donors. How big is the risk of an operation like this?"**

---

"Well, there is obviously a risk of rejection, and there is a risk of it not working, risk of infection, but all those risks would have been discussed in detail with the patients in advance of any procedure."

**"So the wombs will be taken out of the women after they've had a successful pregnancy?"**

"I think that's the plan, occasionally in a few selected individuals, as Richard said this morning on the radio discussing that his team might leave the womb so the woman could have a second pregnancy but then the plan would be to remove it after that."

**"Is there a big ethical issue here that has had to be considered Jane?"**

"I think yes, as with any transplant program actually. Years ago there was an enormous debate over the renal transplant program which is now very much accepted. I know that Richard's team has spent a long time; many, many years developing this program and obviously during that time they had all the ethical discussions that were appropriate and important and that's why they've got to this point now. It's really good news for these patients actually."

**"They've got to raise half a millions pounds for the trial. Do you envisage this procedure ever being available on the NHS?"**

"Difficult to know, I mean it's difficult to know what's going to be available on the NHS in 5, 10 years' time. I know that they're funding this program via charity, via charitable donations. I think again Richard Smith's team feel that they may be able to do that in the future as well if the trial is successful."

**"One can only imagine the torment of those women born without a [uterus](#), for whom this now provides hope there must be a huge emotional impact of that"**

"Yes I mean we see a number of these patients here in Cambridge and prior to this they could either adopt or they could consider surrogacy and we have been talking to them because we knew this program was developing and a number of them have expressed interest in it for the future so it would be really interesting to see how this progresses."

**"And I know things move at a pace in the medical world but all those that its given hope to but realistically how long might they have to wait for this to become available and how many operations might happen per year for instance?"**

"I believe the initial plan is that they're going to have 20 patients on the program over a period of two years and then following that you might envisage 10 a year or something like that if it was working. Perhaps if in two years' time the trail has been successful it may become available as far as that team is concerned."

**"It is amazing how quickly things have changed, could you have imagined this when you started out training Jane?"**

"I think it was always a sort of a pipe dream in way that we might be able to this in the future but you didn't really imagine that it would happen because it's a really big ask for not just a transplant for the [uterus](#) but to allow that [uterus](#) to grow with a pregnancy and that's a much bigger ask than perhaps just transplanting of a kidney which in itself a very complex procedure."

**"Absolutely, Jane I really appreciate your thoughts this morning. Thank you so much for joining us"**

"Thank you very much"

*Please note that this interview is only available for 30 days*

---

