

## Depression, continued from page B6

African Americans of all ages, male and female. African American teenagers are more likely to attempt suicide than are white teenagers. Young African Americans are much less likely than white youth to have used a mental health service in the year during which they seriously thought about or attempted suicide.

Causes of depression can have a combination of causes, including stress, negative thinking patterns, other illnesses, a family history of mental health issues, drug and alcohol abuse, brain chemistry, hormones, and surroundings and life experiences, including trauma or abuse. Mental health problems have nothing to do with laziness, weakness, or character flaws.

Brother, You're on My Mind is a partnership between NIMHD and the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. The initiative is intended to raise awareness of the mental health challenges associated with depression and stress that affect African American men and their families.

### How to Manage Stress

Stress is often associated with depression. Sometimes, if not managed well, it can lead to symptoms of depression. Therefore, it is very important to learn how to manage stress on a regular basis.

### Examples of how you can manage stress

Stay in touch with people who can provide emotional and other support, including friends, family, and community or religious organizations. Get proper health care for existing or new health problems. Set priorities, decide what must get done and what can wait, and learn to say no to new tasks if they are putting you into overload. Note what you have accomplished at the end of the day, not what you have been unable to do. Avoid dwelling on problems. If you can't do this on your own, seek help from a qualified mental health professional who can guide you. Exercise regularly—just 30 minutes per day of easy walking or other exercise can help boost your mood and reduce

stress. Schedule regular times for healthy and relaxing activities. Recognize signs of your body's response to stress, such as difficulty sleeping, increased alcohol and other substance use, being easily angered, feeling depressed, and having low energy. Explore stress coping programs, which may incorporate meditation, yoga, tai chi, or other gentle exercises.

### How to Address Depression

A doctor or other health professional may be able to diagnose and treat depression or refer you to other mental health services, such as counseling or talk therapy. Try to see someone as soon as possible; research shows that getting treatment sooner rather than later can relieve symptoms more quickly and reduce how long treatment is needed.

Individual, family, or employer health insurance can help cover costs, and community or student health centers can provide basic health care services at little or no cost. There are also other steps you can take: Spend time with other people. Try not to isolate yourself, and let others help you. Break up large tasks into small ones, and do what you can as you can; try not to do too many things at once. Do not make important decisions until you feel better; talk about decisions with others whom you trust and who know you well. Engage in mild physical activity or exercise. Participate in activities that you used to enjoy. Expect your mood to improve gradually with treatment. Often, sleep and appetite will begin to improve before your depressed mood lifts. Remember that positive thinking will replace negative thoughts over time.

Of course, if you or someone you know is in crisis, get help quickly: Call your doctor. Call 911 for emergency services. Go to the nearest hospital emergency room.

Call the toll-free, 24-hour hotline of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255); TTY: 1-800-799-4TTY (1-800-799-4889).

## U.S. Surgeons Transplant Pig Heart into Human Patient

By Carla K. Johnson  
Associated Press

In a medical first, doctors transplanted a pig heart into a patient in a last-ditch effort to save his life and a Maryland hospital said Monday that he's doing well three days after the highly experimental surgery.

While it's too soon to know if the operation really will work, it marks a step in the decades-long quest to one day use animal organs for life-saving transplants. Doctors at the University of Maryland Medical Center say the transplant showed that a heart from a genetically modified animal can function in the human body without immediate rejection.

The patient, David Bennett, a 57-year-old Maryland handyman, knew there was no guarantee the experiment would work but he was dying, ineligible for a human heart transplant and had no other option, his son told The Associated Press.

"It was either die or do this transplant. I want to live. I know it's a shot in the dark, but it's my last choice," Bennett said a day before the surgery, according to a statement provided by the Univer-

sity of Maryland School of Medicine.

On Monday, Bennett was breathing on his own while still connected to a heart-lung machine to help his new heart. The next few weeks will be critical as Bennett recovers from the surgery and doctors carefully monitor how his heart is faring.

There's a huge shortage of human organs donated for transplant, driving scientists to try to figure out how to use animal organs instead. Last year, there were just over 3,800 heart transplants in the U.S., a record number, according to the United Network for Organ Sharing, which oversees the nation's transplant system.

"If this works, there will be an endless supply of these organs for patients who are suffering," said Dr. Muhammad Mohiuddin, scientific director of the Maryland university's animal-to-human transplant program.

But prior attempts at such transplants — or xenotransplantation — have failed, largely because patients' bodies rapidly rejected the animal organ. Notably, in 1984, Baby Fae, a dying infant, lived 21 days with a baboon heart.

The difference this time: The Maryland surgeons used a heart from a pig that had undergone gene-editing to remove a sugar in its cells that's responsible for that hyperfast organ rejection. Several biotech companies are developing pig organs for human transplant; the one used for Friday's operation came from Revivacor, a subsidiary of United Therapeutics.

"I think you can characterize it as a watershed event," Dr. David Klassen, UNOS' chief medical officer, said of the Maryland transplant.

Still, Klassen cautioned that it's only a first tentative step into exploring whether this time around, xenotransplantation might finally work.

The Food and Drug Administration, which oversees such experiments, allowed the surgery under what's called a "compassionate use" emergency authorization, available when a patient with a life-threatening condition has no other options.

It will be crucial to share the data gathered from this transplant before extending it to more patients, said Karen Maschke, a research scholar at the Hastings

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## HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED

how doctors know how to treat heart disease?  
How mammograms work to detect cancer?  
or how the COVID-19 vaccine was developed?

Research provides the tools we need to improve and possibly save our lives. Over hundreds of years of research have been done to help us understand diseases and find the best, yet safest treatments or medical device to find or lower chances of developing a disease. It is the cornerstone in creating healthy communities.

Meharry Medical College was founded and exists to improve the health and healthcare of minorities and underserved communities. At Meharry, researchers aim to reduce diseases or illnesses that impact people of color and those who are disadvantaged at higher rates. One way this is done is through the Research Centers in Minority Institutions Program in Health Disparities, which includes the Meharry Community Engagement Core.

The Meharry Community Engagement Core, started in 2017, is led by researchers with experience in various types of research and research areas including diabetes, breast cancer, and HIV. The Core supports researchers in efforts to partner with the community to combine their knowledge and expertise to address health concerns of our communities. In addition, the Core works closely with a Community Advisory Board (CAB) to help develop and shape the Core's research priorities to ensure we address the needs of our communities while fostering trust. Members of the CAB represent faith based organizations, health care institutions, and community-based organizations.

Engagement in research is more than just participating in research studies. It starts with making sure community members understand the basics of research and researchers understand how to engage community members in the research process. This can be accomplished with introductory research training for community members to help the conduct or lead the research or researchers to learn strategies to engage or partner with community in research.

The Meharry Community Engagement offers several ways the community can be involved in research. Not only can community members sign up to learn more about research studies, they can also inform research studies by providing input on the goals or design of the study or partnering with academic researchers to conduct research studies.

A major component of the core is to share results of the studies that have been done at Meharry. To share study findings, Meharry Community Engagement Core continues to work with researchers and members of the community to develop strategies to provide study results including phone, email, social media, or forums, town hall meetings, or workshops. Researchers are being trained on the best ways to work with past participants and the community-at-large to provide study results.

In future ads with the Tribune, the Meharry Community Engagement core will feature researchers and the findings from their studies being conducted at Meharry Medical College. We hope this is the first step in building sustainable relationships where leadership is shared among researchers and the community in carrying out research efforts. This will work toward a better future, a healthier community.

If you want to learn more about the Meharry Community Engagement Core or if you want to partner with us, we can be reached online, [www.meharryresearchconnect.org](http://www.meharryresearchconnect.org), via email [community@mmc.edu](mailto:community@mmc.edu), or by phone 615-327-5807.



Top row l-r; Stephania Miller-Hughes, PhD (director); Kimberlee Wyche-Etheridge, MD (associate director); Jennifer Cunningham-Erves, PhD (faculty); and Maureen Sanderson, PhD (faculty); Bottom row l-r; Sylvie Akohoue, PhD (faculty); Leah Alexander, PhD (faculty); Elizabeth Stewart, DrPH (post-doctoral fellow); Jillian Duke, MSPH (program manager)