



THE EVENING BULLETIN Dominican Girls Are 13 Months Old Siamese Twins Undergo Surgery



Dr. C. Everett Koop, surgeon.

THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Twins Are Separated—And Survive

Two 13-month-old Siamese twins were successfully separated in a rare, 10½-hour operation at Children's Hospital Wednesday. The past weeks have been hectic for them and their mother, here is their story.

By DONALD C. DRAKE

At first, they were thought to be anything wrong with the two little girls, who were passing games with their mother in the crib bed at Children's Hospital.

8-HOUR OPERATION SEPARATES TWINS

23 Doctors and Nurses in Surgery on Babies Born Joined at the Torso

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 18 (UPI)—A relatively rare operation to separate Siamese twins completed in about eight hours by a team of 23

THE GOD-FEARING SURGEON WHO SEPARATED THE TWINS



Before they were separated, Alta (right) and Clara (left) were joined, one usually had to sit up for the other to sleep.

A NEW LIFE FOR CLARA AND ALTA

By DAVID M. CLEARY
Of The Bulletin Staff

Clara and Alta, Rodriguez, 13-month-old Siamese twins who came here from their native Dominican Republic ten days ago, are undergoing separation surgery today. The aim is to make each girl an individual, independent of the other whom she has been joined to since birth.

Dr. C. Everett Koop, chief surgeon, said the twins' health is excellent.

At Children's Hospital, Philadelphia, the twins' mother, Mrs. Maria Rodriguez, is seen with them.



Siamese Twins Separated During 10½-Hour Operation

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Siamese twins occur only once in 40,000 births, when the fertilized egg doesn't divide completely as it normally does in twin conceptions. Most Siamese twins are stillborn. A few are born alive but share a single vital organ. Like a heart, making separation impossible without sacrificing one of them. Other times they are joined at the



UP FRONT

Siamese Twins OK after Separation Here



Siamese Twins Being Separated in Philadelphia

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eat well, have gained weight steadily since birth, and have no heart problem. But unless they're separated, each girl's legs will shrivel from disuse; they can develop into normal women only if each has an opportunity to learn to walk, run and play at the usual stage of childhood for those activities.

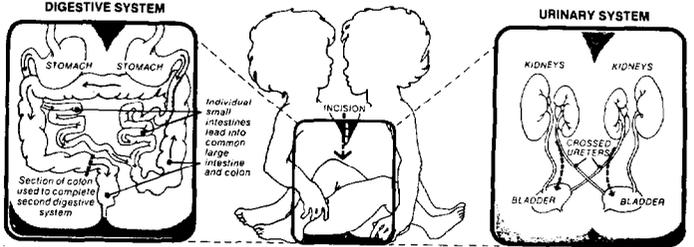
If everything works out, each girl will be a whole person...



Children's Hospital surgeons operate to separate Siamese twins.

Siamese Twins Separated Here

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Once the twins' digestive, urinary, and circulatory systems were separated...



Sorting out the twins: Diagram shows how surgeons corrected babies' digestive and urinary abnormalities.



The Siamese twins were brought to the operating room at 5:45 a.m. and were positioned on foam rubber wedge-shaped cushions which were pulled back as the youngsters were separated. Pre-operative preparations took four hours. Clara and Alta were ready for surgery at 10:10 a.m. Dr. Josephine Templeton (above), anesthesiologist, comforts Alta during pre-operative preparations.

10½-Hour Operation Combined Several Surgical Techniques Commonly Used At Children's Hospital

Procedures performed on the twins that are performed several times each year at Children's Hospital

Procedure	Average Number Performed at Children's in a Year
Imperforate Anus	8.5
Omphalocele	13.5
Trans Ureteroureterostomy	2

The twins shared a rectum which was given to Clara at separation. However, Dr. Koop was able to build a new rectum for Alta using another muscle as a rectal sling.

Since the twins are joined facing each other both had a large abdominal wound after separation. By breaking the pelvic bone, pulling the hips around and suturing the pelvis together, the wound was closed in Alta. Clara had enough skin to close the wound so that no artificial skin was needed to bridge the gap in the abdominal wall.

In the twins, the ureters were crossed and drained into the other ureter. They had to be resected. This technique is different from the usual implantation of ureters into the bladder and was chosen in order to avoid entering the bladder and making another opening.



Two full surgical teams worked simultaneously. Twenty-three members of the O.R. staff were needed for the separation procedure. Dr. John J. Downes, Jr., headed the anesthesiology team. Dr. John W. Duckett, Jr., headed the urology team. Orthopedic surgery was performed by Dr. Stanley Chung, Children's chief of orthopedics. Dr. Koop was assisted by Dr. Louise Schnauer, associate surgeon, and chief surgical residents Dr. Edwin Hatch and Dr. John M. Templeton, Jr.



Actual separation took place at 12:37 p.m.

Though the separation of the Rodriguez twins received world-wide acclaim, Dr. C. Everett Koop, surgeon-in-chief at Children's, notes that each procedure performed on Clara and Alta is performed many times a year at Children's Hospital. The separation of the twins was unique because it involved all of the procedures at once.

"For example," Dr. Koop explained, "we build several rectums a year at Children's because some infants are born

without a rectum. Many are born without abdominal walls.

"None of the techniques used on the twins was new to us. We just had to decide the order in which we would make the repairs."

Dr. Koop continued, "This is where our planning sessions were crucial. I estimate that 100 man-hours went into the planning of this operation.

"We had to consider everything that could go wrong and decide how we would

handle each crisis.

The anesthesiology team had a tremendous responsibility. They were responsible for the life sustaining devices during surgery. Dr. John J. Downes, Jr., headed the Anesthesiology team.

"I can honestly say that everything went right during the operation. The skull sessions paid off. Surgery was completed successfully at 5:10 p.m.," Dr. Koop concluded.



Dr. Koop spoke to the media after the operation to report that the twins were doing "very well."



Clara, the larger twin, was taken off the respirator 48 hours after surgery, 24 hours before her smaller sister. When Clara woke up she was placed in her sister's crib. On seeing Alta she became very quiet, then reached out to touch Alta's hand. The youngsters remained in the same bed while at Children's Hospital. At first nurses observed that the twins constantly sought each other out. They clung to each other's nightgown strings while sleeping.

Before separation Clara had been the dominant twin. Because she was larger she always won the squabbles. But after surgery Alta acquired a more aggressive personality of her own.

NURSES HELP TWINS ADJUST TO SEPARATION



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Both children were put on soft diets seven days after surgery. On the twelfth day they began to eat solid foods. Nurses reported they were eating well and gaining weight.

It wasn't long before the girls were smiling again. They learned to wave and Clara called "Bye-Bye" to everyone leaving the Intensive Care Unit.