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Photo by: Rabin Medical Center

Spare lung from Cyprus transplanted at Beilinson

By JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH
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After complicated mission, Israeli who has a rare blood type recipient of healthy lung retrieved by private plane.

A healthy lung that could not be used in Cyprus was shipped to the Rabin Medical Center Beilinson Campus in Petah Tikva this week and successfully implanted into an Israeli who has a rare blood type.

A Beilinson medical team flew by private plane to Cyprus to retrieve the organ, under an agreement with that country's medical system, which transplants kidneys into its own patients, but not other organs. When no one in countries near Cyprus with which it also has organ exchange agreements was found suitable, it was offered to Israel Transplant.

Dr. Binyamin Medallion, a senior cardiothoracic surgeon, headed the team that flew to Cyprus and returned with the lung.

The anonymous donor was a 27-year-old Cypriot who suffered lower-brain death while undergoing brain surgery.

The organ had to be delivered and readied for transplant within four hours. Every minute was critical. Arrangements were made for the pilot and plane even before it was certain that the lung was suitable for the would-be recipient.

The Beilinson team placed the organ in a cooler with ice and special solutions.

Funding for the project was approved by Prof. Rafael Beyar, director-general of Rambam Medical Center who is also chairman of Israel Transplant.

After many tense moments, the lung was transplanted into 60-year-old Michael Merzeyev, from Tel Aviv, who suffered from silicosis, a condition in which exposure to marble dust – during work – destroys the lungs. He was in stable condition on Thursday, and being treated in Beilinson's intensive care unit.



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