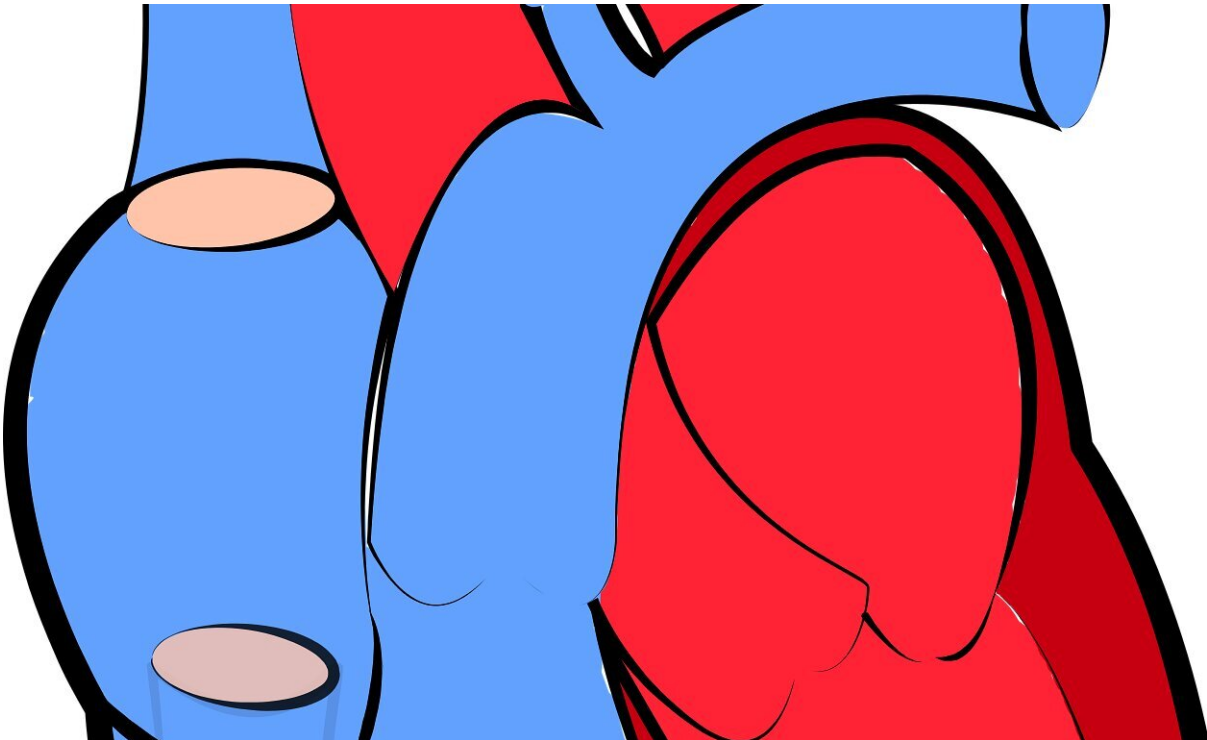


Heart transplants from severely obese donors show comparable outcomes for patients

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Heart transplant patients who received hearts from severely obese donors had similar short-term outcomes and long-term survival as patients who received hearts from non-obese donors, according to new research published today in *Circulation: Heart Failure*, an American Heart Association journal.

The waiting list for a [heart transplant](#) in the U.S. is continuously about 3,000 people, and only half of those people receive a [donor heart](#) within a year. There is an urgent need to expand the pool of potential heart donors; however, transplant centers are hesitant to accept hearts from obese donors. In the U.S., almost 40% of the [adult population](#) is classified as obese, and nearly 8% have [severe obesity](#), which is defined as a body mass index (BMI) greater than or equal to 40.

"As the [prevalence of obesity](#) in the U.S. continues to rise, it directly affects the pool of organ donors," said Leora T. Yarboro, M.D., lead study author and associate professor of surgery at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia. "Since the prevalence of severe obesity has increased significantly over the past 15 years, we wanted to investigate the outcomes of recipients of transplant hearts from donors with severe obesity."

The study used the national United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) database to analyze the outcomes of 26,000 heart transplants from 2003-2017. Approximately 900, or 3.5%, of the donors had severe obesity. Severely obese donors, a BMI >40, were more likely to be older and female. In addition:

- 10% of severely obese donors had diabetes vs. 3% of non-obese donors;
- 33% of obese donors had hypertension vs. 15% of donors with BMI

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