



## Media Alert

April 28, 2003

What: **PRESS CONFERENCE TODAY**

When: **April 28, 4 p.m.**

Where: **Medical City Cafeteria Meeting Room  
7777 Forest Lane**

Contact: **Susan K. McBee**

Office: 972-566-7032

Pager: 214-657-1119

### **Egyptian twins undergo tissue expansion today as first step to separation *Press conference to discuss procedure, twins' progress, next steps.***

DALLAS – **Conjoined identical twins Ahmed and Mohamed Ibrahim** underwent a tissue expansion procedure today—the first surgery leading to eventual separation surgery this summer.

**Dr. Kenneth E. Salyer** and members of his surgical team will discuss results of the six-hour surgery, why the tissue expansion process is necessary, what the procedure involves, and the next steps in the twins' slow journey to separation.

The **press conference** is scheduled **today at 4 p.m.** in the Medical City **Cafeteria Meeting Room, located in Atrium A.** Medical City is located at 7777 Forest Lane, one block west of Central Expressway. Parking is available in the west lot on along Park Central. Enter through the A2 entrance.

The boys arrived in Dallas from Cairo, Egypt on June 22, 2002. They are craniopagus twins—joined at the crown of the head—an extremely rare condition that happens in only one out of 2.5 million live births. They were born on June 2, 2001, to Sabah and Ibrahim Ibrahim in a remote village in southern Egypt.

Shortly after their birth, they were placed in the care of Dr. Nasser Abdelal, head of neonatal surgery at the University of Cairo Hospital. Dr. Abdelal was granted legal guardianship to care for and make appropriate medical treatment decisions for the boys.

Dr. Salyer, a craniofacial surgeon and one of the team of specialists in the Dallas Craniofacial Center at Medical City, was asked to evaluate the boys for possible separation surgery. Under the auspices of his foundation, the World Craniofacial Foundation, and with the full support of Medical City, the boys were brought to North Texas Hospital for Children at Medical City for tests and evaluation.

Since coming to Dallas, the twins have undergone numerous medical tests including computed tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging studies (MRI) to help surgeons evaluate the possibility of their surgical separation. Several full-scale models have been made of the boys' skulls to aid in the decision making. In addition, the drainage system has been duplicated to see how many and which vessels are shared. While each twin has his own venous system, the team discovered that their systems are codependent, meaning that they drain into one another. The twins' interdependence of drainage vessels poses a unique challenge to surgeons. "If you don't have adequate drainage, then the surgery is very difficult," Dr. Salyer said.

These tests also have confirmed that the twins have largely separate brains and share less than 10 percent of their brain tissue.

--more--

## **Egyptian twins undergo expansion surgery—Add One**

Preparation for the separation surgery is “like preparing to land on the moon,” according to Dr. Salyer. He characterized the separation surgery as “very tenuous, very hazardous,” although the surgeons involved believe a separation can be successful.

One obstacle to the surgeries is the need for sufficient skin to cover the large wound areas that will be created at the time of separation. Because of the boys’ small size, their existing skin or tissue must be expanded. That surgery was done today.

The surgery involved inserting tissue expanders under the skin at sites on the boys’ heads and on their legs. These expanders are essentially balloons that can be filled with saline on a weekly basis, which will cause stretching of the skin, in essence creating new skin.

Specially designed headgear and vests were created for the boys to wear following the surgery. They help protect the sites where the expanders have been placed and ensure that the tissue expansion process has the greatest potential for success. The boys will lie on an airbed that also has been modified to meet their unique needs. The airbed will keep minimum pressure on their bodies during the long period needed to sufficiently expand the skin. The boys will stay in the hospital throughout this period leading up to separation surgery.

That surgery will take place sometime this summer at Children’s Medical Center, where specialized equipment will help achieve the best possible outcome. Many pediatric specialists will be on hand to assist the team of pediatric neurosurgeons who will perform the brain surgery. Dr. Salyer and members of his team will perform the reconstructive surgery.

Dr. Salyer is founding chairman and director of the International Craniofacial Institute and the Cleft Lip and Palate Treatment Center at Medical City Dallas Hospital. He also is founder of the World Craniofacial Foundation, which is dedicated to helping families and children with craniofacial and cleft deformities. The Foundation provides financial and emotional support, as well as access to life-changing procedures.

The Foundation is underwriting all costs related to travel, lodging and ancillary expenses. All of the doctors are donating their medical expertise; in addition, Medical City is donating all hospital-related costs involved in the care of the twins while they are at this hospital.

Medical City is a 598-bed tertiary medical center that includes the North Texas Hospital for Children at Medical City. Some 1,250 physicians are on the medical staff, along with over 2,600 hospital employees. A recognized leader in healthcare, Medical City and North Texas Hospital for Children serve as referral centers for hospitals throughout the region. Many of the programs have received national and international recognition for the quality of care provided, including cardiovascular, craniofacial, oncology, pediatric and transplant services.

*Note: Daily updates on the conditions of twins are available at [www.medicalcityhospital.com](http://www.medicalcityhospital.com). A information number also is in place for the public to call for the latest information about the boys. The number is 972-566-7435.*

###