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Review article

### Christiaan Barnard and his contributions to heart transplantation

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#### Abstract

Christiaan (Chris) Barnard was born in South Africa in 1922 and qualified in medicine at the University of Cape Town in 1946. Following surgical training in Cape Town and Minneapolis, Barnard established a successful open heart surgery program at Groote Schuur Hospital. In 1967, he led the team that performed the world's first human-to-human heart transplant. Although his first patient survived only 18 days, 4 of his first 10 patients survived for more than 1 year, 2 living for 13 and 23 years, respectively. With his junior colleague, Jaques Losman, Barnard then developed the operation of heterotopic heart transplantation. In 1981, his group was the first to successfully transport donor hearts using a hypothermic perfusion storage device. Several studies on the hemodynamic and metabolic sequelae of brain death were carried out in his department. Barnard retired from the University of Cape Town in 1983 at the age of 61.

Now in his 79th year, he continues to pursue his interest in writing for the public. In the words of one of his former colleagues, he is a "surgical visionary and simply the most unforgettable character of the second generation of cardiac surgeons."



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<sup>†</sup> This work is based on a presentation at the 20th annual meeting and scientific sessions of the International Society for Heart and Lung Transplantation, April 2000, Osaka, Japan.

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