

## UoN, KNH medical team separates conjoined twins in 23-hour surgery

*College of Health Sciences, University of Nairobi and Kenyatta National Hospital medical team carry Blessing, one of the baby girls who were born joined at the sacral region of lower spinal cord on 4th September, 2014, after a successful separation surgery on Wednesday.*

A medical team from the College of Health Sciences (CHS) of [University of Nairobi](#) (UoN) and Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH) successfully separated conjoined twins on 1st November, 2016.

The twin girls, Blessing and Favour who were born joined at the sacral region of lower spinal cord on 4th September, 2014 began a new life apart after a separation surgery that lasted for 23 hours.

The multidisciplinary team of over 50 medical specialists including paediatric surgeons, neurosurgeons, plastic and reconstructive surgeons, anaesthetists and nurses was led by [Dr. Chris Musau](#) from the Department of Surgery at the College of Health Sciences, (UoN) and Dr. Fred Kambuni from KNH.

The lead consultants were [Prof. Nimrod Mwang'ombe](#), (UoN Neurosurgeon) and [Prof. Julius Kyambi](#), (UoN Paediatric Surgeon).

The UoN team comprised of the following: Dr. Chris Musau, Dr. Julius Kiboi and Dr. Vincent Wekesa (Neurosurgeons), Dr. Francis Osawa, Dr. Peter Mwika, (Paediatric surgeons), [Dr. Joseph Wanjeri](#), and [Dr. Ferdinand Nang'ole](#), (Plastic surgeons), [Dr. Mark Gacii](#) and [Dr. Susane Nabulindo](#), (Anaesthetists).

The 23-hour long highly delicate surgery which was performed at the KNH Main Theatres started on Tuesday morning at 6am and ended on Wednesday at 5am.

The children were referred soon after birth and the surgery performed at the age of two years at which time the key organs had developed sufficiently and there was enough muscle bulk to withstand surgery.

Conjoined twins are rare and many are still born or die soon after birth. The separation can be easy or difficult and delicate depending on the body organs involved. Separation can result in the death of one or both twins depending on the complexity of the surgery. The first successful separation of conjoined twins was performed in United States in 1955 and there have been several others since that time.

The separation of Favour and Blessing was difficult because the spine, buttock and pelvic muscles nerves, and gastrointestinal tracts were shared. Therefore the approach had to be multidisciplinary as is usually the case in most separations.

KNH is the teaching hospital of the University of Nairobi and therefore it has the benefit of the university pool of skilled and experienced surgeons. The live video recording facilities

installed within KNH theatres by UoN made it possible for the post graduate students from the different disciplines to follow the surgery from a class room within the operating theatres.