

This is Jasmine's Story ...

When Jasmine spent four days in the RHW suffering from morning sickness during the early stages of her pregnancy, little did she know that this was just the beginning of an unpredictable experience that was going to send her life into an alarming spin for the next six months.

Jasmine was expecting twins, but her 20 weeks scan confirmed that the babies had twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome. Some twins come from one egg and are known as "identical". Most of these twins end up sharing a single placenta, which was the case with Jasmine's twins. In acute cases, sometimes one twin will give away too much blood to the other twin causing this baby to become overloaded with excess blood while the 'donor' baby becomes short of blood. In very extreme cases either baby could die. How is this circulation managed? At 22 weeks gestation, Prof Alec Welsh performed successful laser surgery by disconnecting certain vessels to stop the excess flow.

At 23 weeks the scan showed the twins looked well with normalised blood flows. Mum could now look forward to delivering healthy twin girls. But something very unusual started to happen during the next two weeks. There was reduced fluid in the twin that previously had excess fluid and the baby started to look very sick. There was the concern that one twin could die and that the surviving twin could have a number of long term problems.

Every morning at 8:00 o'clock Prof Welsh would meet with Jasmine and carry out early morning scans, and with continuous care he would be able to time things right. This allowed her to make a decision immediately if anything happened. At 26 weeks the blood flow in one twin was becoming acutely anaemic. The other twin's heart function looked terrible, and Prof Welsh was very worried. After discussions with Jasmine, she decided on delivery and a caesarean was performed that afternoon knowing that both babies were very sick indeed. Was it possible for the twins, or even one baby, to survive such an ordeal?

"My precious twin daughters, Nacia and Jahlina, were delivered by caesarean section on 10th



Professor Alec Welsh with Jasmine and Jaram and their precious daughters Nacia and Jahlina

January 2008 at 3:00 pm. The operating theatre seemed to be over-crowded with medical staff, but I realised very quickly that they all had a job to do; and that was to save my babies. They were born 14 weeks too early, and together weighed just 1.710 kilograms. What chance did my babies really have? They were so small, and had so many problems facing them. If only I could just have one cuddle. But I realised even before they were born, that this was going to be impossible.

"Within a few minutes of delivery they were in the caring hands of the neonatologists and nurses in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit. I can remember visiting the Unit for the first time to see my baby girls. It was frightening. The twins had so many tubes attached to them and their humidicribs were surrounded by a massive amount of technical equipment. As parents, Jaram and I knew that if our babies were to survive the next 24 hours, this was the only place for them to be.

"Nacia and Jahlina have now been in the "Royal" for over two months and it will be awhile yet before we can take them home. They are so perfect. We can change their nappies and give them lots of cuddles now. They are still being fed through a tube, but will soon graduate to bottles. Nacia now weighs 2.2 kilos and Jahlina 1.95 kilos" says Jasmine.

The equipment that kept these beautiful twins alive in the Intensive Care Unit was purchased by the Royal Hospital for Women Foundation through donations from so many of our newsletter readers. On behalf of Jasmine and Jaram, thank you all for helping save the lives of these cherished babies.