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Pregnant COVID-19 patient saved by ECMO

Recently, a pregnant COVID-19 patient with severe respiratory failure was admitted to the University Clinical Hospital in Wroclaw, Poland. Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) therapy was provided which enabled the patient's lungs time to heal and a successful C-section was able to be performed two weeks later.

Some time ago, a pregnant, COVID-19 patient with severe viral symptoms was admitted to the University Clinical Hospital in Wroclaw, Poland. She quickly deteriorated and could no longer breathe on her own. At that point, the medical team intubated her with a ventilator and induced a pharmacological coma.

"The patient was in her 27th week of pregnancy and the baby was not developed enough to be delivered prematurely," says prof. Mariusz Zimmer, Head of II Department of Gynaecology and Obstetrics at the University Clinical Hospital.

The physicians put the woman on Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO); a therapeutic approach used in the treatment of acute respiratory distress syndrome or acute heart failure. The ECMO device circulates the patient's blood outside of the body through an external oxygenator and supports the function of lungs and/or heart during patient recovery.

"We kept the patient on ECMO for two weeks with the use of Getinge's device Cardiohelp. Our gynecologists and anesthesiologists were then able to perform a C-section delivering a healthy baby girl weighing 1440 grams who tested negative for COVID-19."

When the patient woke up after the surgery, she was surprised – weeks earlier she entered the hospital because of infection symptoms and now, she was suddenly a mother.

"The patient's lungs were in very poor condition from the beginning, but the ECMO therapy gave the lungs the time they needed to heal. We were very happy to see how well she recovered. Today, both mother and daughter are at home doing well."

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