

July 8, 2003

For Immediate Use

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Roxanne Moster, roxannem@support.ucla.edu

Amy Waddell, awaddell@support.ucla.edu

Elaine Schmidt, elaines@support.ucla.edu

UCLA Health Sciences Media Relations

(310) 794-0777

Guatemalan Twin Maria Teresa Shows Neurological Setback, Say Doctors at UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital

(Note to Editors: No UCLA doctors are available for interviews; there are no new images or B-roll.)

Separated Guatemalan twin Maria Teresa Quiej Alvarez shows signs of a neurological setback and is in fair condition, doctors announced July 8 at UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital.

"Unfortunately, Maria Teresa has suffered a setback in her neurological development," explained Dr. Jorge Lazareff, lead neurosurgeon for the twins' medical team and director of pediatric neurosurgery. "This is a result of the meningitis she contracted in Guatemala eight months after the separation surgery and four months after leaving UCLA."

"Her sister Maria de Jesus is doing remarkably well, however, and we are immensely pleased with her neurological condition," he said.

Maria de Jesus was discharged from Mattel Children's Hospital on June 7 and is staying at the home of a Healing the Children volunteer.

A last-minute fever delayed Maria Teresa's discharge from the hospital on Friday. Her doctors resolved her fever, but decided to keep the 23-month-old twin hospitalized in order to monitor her condition. They have not yet determined a new discharge date.

The formerly conjoined twins were separated during a nearly 23-hour surgery at UCLA on Aug. 6, 2002. They flew home to Guatemala on Jan. 13, 2003, and then returned to Los Angeles on May 22 for additional medical care.

Healing the Children is accepting donations on behalf of the twins at Box 221478, Newhall, CA 91322. For more details, see www.healingchildren.org or call toll-free (877) 432-5543.

-UCLA-

July 3, 2003

For Immediate Use

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Roxanne Moster, roxannem@support.ucla.edu

Amy Waddell, awaddell@support.ucla.edu

Elaine Schmidt, elaines@support.ucla.edu

UCLA Health Sciences Media Relations

(310) 794-0777

REVISED UPDATE

Fever Delays Discharge of Second Guatemalan Twin From UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital

(Note to Editors: This press release is an update from today's earlier press release. No UCLA doctors are available for interviews.)

A last-minute fever has temporarily delayed the discharge of 23-month-old Guatemalan twin Maria Teresa Quiej Alvarez today from UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital.

According to Cris Embleton of Healing The Children, they were about to leave the hospital when she noticed Maria Teresa's forehead was starting to feel warm. She notified the doctors who decided, out of an abundance of caution, to keep her hospitalized for further observation.

The twin's fever subsided after taking an over the counter pain reliever. Doctors are continuing to monitor her condition and expect that she'll be discharged tomorrow.

-UCLA-

July 3, 2003

For Immediate Use

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Roxanne Moster, roxannem@support.ucla.edu

Amy Waddell, awaddell@support.ucla.edu

Elaine Schmidt, elaines@support.ucla.edu

UCLA Health Sciences Media Relations

(310) 794-0777

Second Guatemalan Twin Discharged From UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital

(Note to Editors: No UCLA doctors are available for interviews; there are no new images or b-roll.)

Doctors at UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital discharged 23-month-old Guatemalan twin Maria Teresa Quiej Alvarez on Thursday, July 3.

Maria Teresa has been recuperating from a May 30 surgery at UCLA to replace a shunt that helps drain fluid from her brain. Surgeons had also placed a tube into her stomach for nutritional support while performing an anti-reflux procedure.

Maria Teresa will stay at the home of a local volunteer family from the nonprofit group Healing the Children. Her twin sister, Maria de Jesus, who was discharged from Mattel Children's Hospital on June 7, is at the home of another Healing the Children volunteer family. Both twins will visit each other often until their return to Guatemala.

"Although Maria Teresa is making steady progress from her recent surgery, we are still watching to see how she will recover from her bout with E. coli meningitis, which she contracted in April while in Guatemala," said Dr. Jorge Lazareff, lead neurosurgeon for the twins' medical team and director of pediatric neurosurgery. "While she has experienced a neurological set-back, only time will tell what lasting effects the meningitis will have on her. I remain optimistic that she will continue to improve."

Both twins continue to undergo physical and occupational therapy in an outpatient setting.

In addition, her twin sister, Maria de Jesus, is still being treated for a small, post-operative scalp wound that needs more attention.

"The wound is healing nicely," said Dr. Henry Kawamoto, the twins' lead plastic surgeon. "Ironically, Maria Teresa had minimal problems from a plastic surgery point of view. Both twins will require future reconstructive surgery to improve the shape of their skull caps and normalize their hair patterns."

"While Maria Teresa has an uphill battle ahead of her, she has many people in the battle with her and we are all praying for her continued healing." said Cris Embleton, co-founder of Healing the Children. "Also, we are so appreciative that the twins have been able to be close to one another. Maria de Jesus has been a frequent visitor to see her sister and, as you can imagine with any set of twin sisters, they are truly helping and supporting each other."

Healing the Children is the nonprofit organization that worked to bring the twins to UCLA last year for separation surgery, and arranged for the girls to fly to Los Angeles on May 22 for additional medical care.

Healing the Children is accepting donations on behalf of the twins at Box 221478, Newhall, CA 91322. For more details, see www.healingchildren.org or call toll-free (877) 432 5543.

The formerly conjoined twins were separated during a nearly 23-hour surgery at UCLA on Aug. 6, 2002. They returned to Guatemala on Jan. 13, 2003.

June 7, 2003

For Immediate Use

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Roxanne Moster, roxannem@support.ucla.edu

Amy Waddell, awaddell@support.ucla.edu

Elaine Schmidt, elaines@support.ucla.edu

UCLA Health Sciences Media Relations
(310) 794-0777

Guatemalan Twin Maria de Jesus Discharged From UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital

Doctors at UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital discharged 23-month-old Guatemalan twin Maria de Jesus Quiej Alvarez June 7. She will stay with local volunteers from Healing the Children while her sister, Maria Teresa, continues to recuperate from a May 30 surgery.

Maria de Jesus was initially admitted to the hospital for an overall assessment after experiencing a convulsion and fever in Guatemala, as well as for an evaluation of her postoperative wounds.

"Maria de Jesus still has a small wound that needs more attention, but we can treat her as an outpatient now," said Dr. Henry Kawamoto, the twins' lead plastic and reconstructive surgeon. "We are using a special high-tech topical growth factor gel donated by Ortho-McNeil Pharmaceutical to Maria de Jesus' wound to accelerate wound healing."

Called Regranex, the gel contains a factor normally found in the body (referred to as a platelet-derived growth factor) that is part of the body's natural healing process.

Maria Teresa remains in good condition following a two-part surgery on May 30 to replace a shunt to help drain fluid from her brain and place a tube into her stomach for nutritional support while performing an anti-reflux procedure.

"Maria Teresa continues to progress each day from last week's surgery," said Dr. Jorge Lazareff, lead neurosurgeon for the twins' medical team and director of pediatric neurosurgery. "However, it may take some time before we know the full extent of neurological damage that she suffered during her bout with E. coli meningitis in April."

"We're thrilled that Maria de Jesus is well enough to leave the hospital," said Cris Embleton, co-founder of Healing the Children. "And, we'll make sure that she comes back frequently to visit her sister, though, as they enjoy each other's company."

Healing The Children is the nonprofit organization that worked to bring the twins to UCLA last year for separation surgery, and arranged for the girls to fly to Los Angeles on May 22 for additional medical care.

To donate to the twins' care, please send checks payable to the UCLA Foundation to the Twins Care at UCLA Fund, UCLA Medical Sciences Development, 10945 Le Conte Ave., Suite 3132, Los Angeles, CA 90095.

The formerly conjoined twins were separated during a nearly 23-hour surgery at UCLA on Aug. 6, 2002. They returned to Guatemala on Jan. 13.

-UCLA-

June 2, 2003

For Immediate Use

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Roxanne Moster, roxannem@support.ucla.edu

Amy Waddell, awaddell@support.ucla.edu

Elaine Schmidt, elaines@support.ucla.edu

UCLA Health Sciences Media Relations

(310) 794-0777

Condition of Guatemalan Twin Upgraded

(Note to editors: No spokespersons are available for interviews.)

The condition of Maria Teresa Quiej Alvarez, the 23-month-old Guatemalan twin who underwent surgery May 30 at UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital, has been upgraded from fair to good. She was moved from the intensive care unit today and joined her sister, Maria de Jesus, in a regular room.

Maria Teresa's surgery included replacing a shunt to help drain fluid from her brain, placing a tube into her stomach for nutritional support and performing an anti-reflux procedure. "We are very pleased that Maria Teresa continues to progress each day," said Dr. Jorge Lazareff, lead neurosurgeon for the twins' medical team and director of pediatric neurosurgery. "However, it will still take some time before we know the long term results of last week's surgery." Her twin sister, Maria de Jesus Quiej Alvarez, remains in good condition. Doctors expect to discharge her within the next few days. Healing the Children, the non-profit organization that worked to bring the twins to UCLA last year, arranged for the girls to fly to Los Angeles on May 22. The twins' parents remain in Guatemala. To donate to the twins' care, please send checks payable to the UCLA Foundation to the Twins Care at UCLA Fund, UCLA Medical Sciences Development, 10945 Le Conte Ave., Suite 3132, Los Angeles, CA 90095. The formerly conjoined twins were separated during a nearly 23-hour surgery at UCLA on Aug. 6, 2002. They returned to Guatemala on Jan. 13, 2003.