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Separated twins said to make good progress

The Associated Press

DALLAS — One year ago, twin Egyptian boys born joined at the tops of their heads were separated after a 34-hour procedure that doctors warned could have resulted in the death of one or both.

The bubbly 3-year-olds, Mohamed and Ahmed Ibrahim, continue to get therapy, and doctors say their future is looking bright.

"We don't place any limitations on their improvement," said Dr. Dale Swift, among the five neurosurgeons who helped separate the twins at Children's Medical Center Dallas.

Living with their parents in a Dallas apartment, the boys laugh easily, eagerly repeating words and greeting visitors with a "Hi."

The twins captured the attention of Palm Beach County residents in September 2002, when they came for a special brand of massage therapy from Dr. John Upledger, founder of the Upledger Institute and Foundation, and ventured to local beaches and the Busch Wildlife Sanctuary in their spare time.

The twins' doctors in Dallas hoped that the methods Upledger developed would help stimulate the toddlers' digestive, respiratory and cardiac systems to work independently. The method attempts to reach those systems by gently pressuring the skull, spine and sacrum and the fluid and membranes that make up the craniosacral system.

Mohamed has started to walk while holding onto objects. Ahmed is able to count in English and Arabic. He stands with some help and is working on walking. Although Mohamed is getting around better than Ahmed, Ahmed's language skills are better than Mohamed's.

They still have feeding tubes, but the twins also eat and drink on their own.

"From a cognitive standpoint, they seem to be right on track," said Dr. Frederick Sklar, another neurosurgeon involved in the separation. "They're speaking in two languages; from a motor standpoint they're making progress. We're really optimistic about what they'll ultimately be able to do."

Staff writer Sonja Isgar contributed to this story.

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