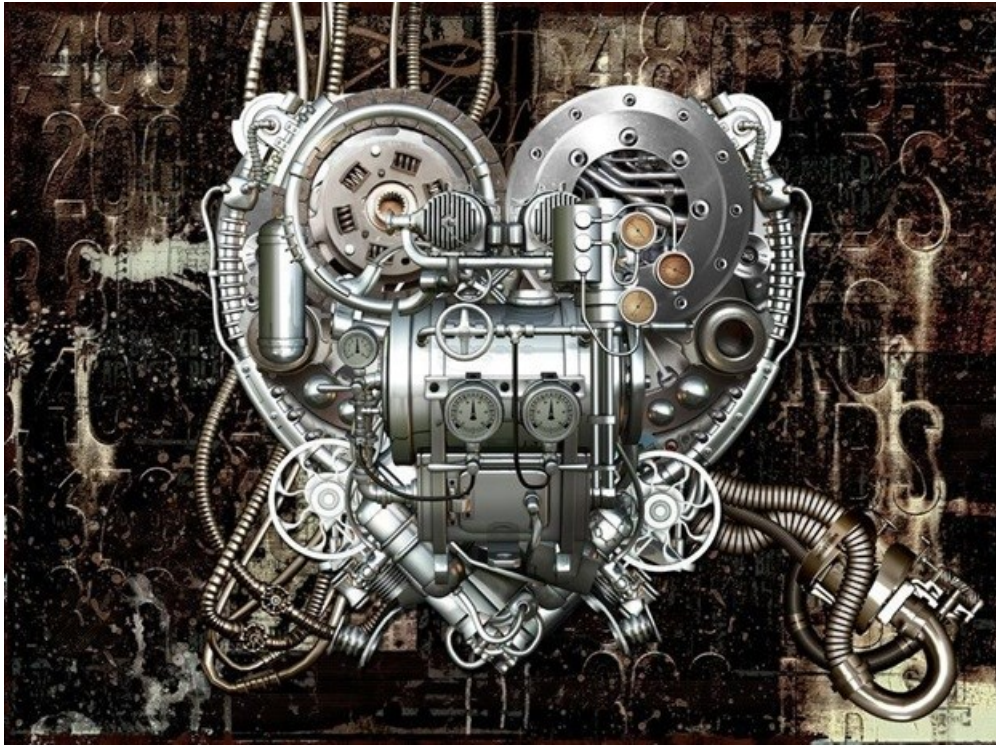


Boy, 5, gets a mechanical heart

By [Aron Hyman](#)

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A five-year-old KwaZulu-Natal boy has become the youngest person in Africa to receive a mechanical heart implantation.



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In what is considered a groundbreaking operation, doctors from the Maboneng Heart Institute at the Netcare Sunninghill Hospital inserted a heart ventricular assist device into Mnotho Mdebele's "severely damaged" heart, which helps it to pump blood.

Mdebele, of Newcastle, weighs 17kg - making him one of the smallest and youngest people to have undergone this type of operation in the world, according to cardiothoracic surgeon Dr Viljee Jonker.

He suffered from dilated cardiomyopathy, a condition that results in the left ventricle of the heart becoming enlarged and weakened and unable to pump blood properly.

After being in an intensive care unit for four months Mnotho is expected to return home this week where Jonker said he

should live a "normal life".

Source: The Times

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