Bruce A. Reitz Encyclopedia Article

Bruce A. Reitz

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American surgeon who in 1981 performed the first successful heart-lung transplant in the world. This operation was important because many patients with failing hearts have lung problems, too, requiring additional surgery. The ability to replace both of these organs at the same time helps to reduce stress on the patient while simultaneously reducing stress on the transplanted organs. However, the surgery can be very delicate and, until Reitz pioneered it, had not succeeded.