

Doctors Admit 'Miracle' as Dead Woman Rises

It took one miracle to revive Ruby Graupera-Cassimiro after 45 minutes without a pulse or heartbeat.

But the 40-year-old mother from Deerfield Beach, Florida, was the grateful recipient of a second miracle when she went home from the hospital with no ill effects from the experience—most notably not even any reduced brain function from 45 minutes without blood circulating there.

She had gone to Boca Raton Regional Hospital in September for what was supposed to be a routine C-section to deliver her second child. On Sept. 23, right after the procedure performed by obstetrician Dr. Michael Fleischer, her heart suddenly stopped beating.

It was caused, doctors said later, by an amniotic fluid embolism. The rare, serious condition occurs when fluid that surrounds a baby in the uterus enters a mother's bloodstream and heart, clogging it. Sudden and unpredictable, it creates a vacuum and stops circulation, according to a report by WPTV television in West Palm Beach.

The medical team intubated her and kept pumping Graupera-Cassimiro's chest for 45 minutes, taking turns to avoid exhaustion. They repeatedly tried shocking her. Nothing worked.

Just hours after Graupera-Cassimiro delivered a healthy baby girl, her distraught husband and other relatives prepared to say good-bye to her as doctors told them there was nothing they could do. The medical team stopped all lifesaving procedures. They watched a heart monitor, preparing to record a time of death.

"There's very few things in medicine that I've seen, working in the trauma center myself and doing all the things that I do, that really were either unexplainable or miraculous," Dr. Anthony Dardano, president of the hospital's medical staff, told the *Sun-Sentinel* newspaper of Fort Lauderdale. "And when I heard this story, that was the first thing that came to my mind."

The family left the room with nurse Julie Ewing after saying their goodbyes. They held hands and prayed, Ewing on her knees.

Then another nurse, Claire Hansen, came out of the operating room. "Keep praying," she said, "because her heart just started."

Screams filled the room as Graupera-Cassimiro's family took in the news. They jumped up and down and cried. Her sister ran into the operating room.

"It was a complete miracle of God. It was answered prayer," Ewing said last week. "We all were there. We all witnessed it."

Within days, she was back at home.

Graupera-Cassimiro returned to the hospital last week for a tearful reunion with the medical team that fought to save her. She hugged the doctors and nurses—who cooed over her daughter, dressed head to toe in pink—and she thanked them.

In the next few hours, Graupera-Cassimiro said, she remembered something she thought had been a dream: what she described as an encounter with the spirit of her late father, who told her it wasn't her time, South Florida news media reported. It dawned on her that it may not have been a dream.

When Dr. Shawn Iverson, a resident from Florida Atlantic University, checked in on her later in the morning, she

gestured upward and nodded. And when Fleischer came to take off the breathing tube, Graupera-Cassimiro told him: "You don't have to be afraid of dying."