

Pregnancy from Frozen Egg is First in State

Josephine Marcate and Chen May Yee, Star Tribune, December 18, 2007

In the first known case in Minnesota, a woman is pregnant from a human donor egg that was frozen and thawed before it was fertilised and implanted in her.

The women's fertility doctors used IVF to achieve the pregnancy in a 48 year old woman, who does not want to be identified.

Her pregnancy means that egg freezing, a controversial technology many say is not ready for prime time, is now available in Minnesota.

The women's doctor Dr Jacques Stassart of Reproductive Medicine and Infertility in Woodbury, said the technology is still experimental, but the clinic will offer it on a case-by-case basis. Early this year he will hold educational seminars for patients and market it to cancer doctors for young women patients at risk of losing their fertility from medical treatments.

But the potential market is much larger – the millions of women who are increasingly delaying child bearing or who want to bank their eggs as insurance against infertility. Experts say egg freezing is the only way to defeat nature by bringing the biological clock to a halt and that it could revolutionise women's reproductive lives as much as the birth control pill did 40 years ago.

Stassart's clinic is among an estimated 138 across the country offering egg freezing and storage. But to date only 300 to 600 babies around the world have been born from frozen eggs. Though the technology is advancing rapidly even the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) recommends it be limited to cancer patients and research studies.

But fertility doctors, who operate largely without federal oversight or research dollars have a long history of trying new technologies on patients. In effect, the federal government "has shunned the responsibility of research onto the patient community," said Jeff Kahn, Director of

the Centre for Bioethics at the University of Minnesota.

With egg freezing, fertility clinics are once again experimenting on patients, said Dr Marc Fritz, Chairman of the practice committee for ASRM.

"What it boils down to is a clinical investigation of an experimental procedure in patients at their expense," Fritz said. "That is what the society feels is not appropriate."

Why is it so hard? Human eggs are large and delicate and for decades have resisted attempts to freeze them the way sperm and embryos can be frozen. The first pregnancies from frozen eggs were reported in 1986 but until recently the process had advanced very slowly.

Eggs are full of water, which crystallises, destroying the cell structure much like water frozen in a bottle expands and cracks the glass. Embryologists now replace water in the cell with sugar or glycerol-based products. And they use either a slow freezing technique or a fast one called vitrification that takes the egg to a temperature of negative 196 degrees centigrade in minutes – too fast for crystals to form.

This latest technological development comes at a time of increasing competition for IVF clinics. Baby boomers are moving past reproductive age, leaving doctors to compete over a smaller number of infertile people in generation X. Among Minnesota's IVF clinics, Sassari's has always been the boldest in marketing to patients.

Sassari said the clinic will follow the guidelines issued by the ASRM on properly informing patients about the procedure. "We are not going to open the front gates with a big sign that says we freeze eggs," Sassari said. "We have to be super careful about not misrepresenting this."

BioQuad™ – THE EMBRYO CULTURE DISH

Mouse Embryo Tested and Validated for 96 hours

4 wells with 5th centre well for humidification or embryo/oocyte sorting

Radius corners allows specimens to roll into the centre of the wells

Adjustable Vented Lid



Rocketmedical

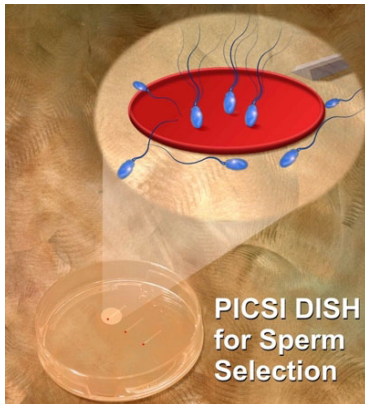
Embryon® Single Use Ultrasound Needle Guides

- COMPATIBLE with standard Hitachi, Toshiba, Siemens, ATL-Philips, GE Health
- ALL GUIDES ACCEPT NEEDLES up to 15g and >150mm in length
- STERILE, SINGLE USE eliminates costly reprocessing concerns, damage or incompatible guides
- GROWING RANGE - We are constantly adding to our needle guide range
- COST EFFECTIVE

MidAtlantic
DIAGNOSTICS, INC.

PICSI Dish for Sperm Selection

Using the technology of Hyaluronan Binding Assay (HBA™), PICSI Sperm Selection Dish helps select motile sperm for ICSI



PICSI DISH
for Sperm
Selection

SAGE Assisted Reproduction Products™
a CooperSurgical Company

PureCeption®

An 80% (v/v) or 40% (v/v) sterile colloidal suspension of silica particles stabilized with covalently bound hydrophilic silane formulated in HEPES-buffered human tubal fluid. The kit components will allow for the highly efficient separation of motile sperm from the ejaculate of most semen species.

Sterile filtered to remove particles, improve stability, enhance performance and avoid sedimentation

Tested using one-cell mouse embryo bioassay and endotoxin assays to ensure quality and safety



Embryon® BulbTip™ Embryo Transfer Catheters

Embryon® Embryo Transfer Catheters have been established as the leading embryo transfer catheter in over 10 years of world-wide usage. Clinicians have come to rely on the largest choice of user options, proven embryo safety and hand-crafted quality that Embryon® offers.

New BulbTip Outer Sheath with smooth bulb formed tip to improve location during insertion

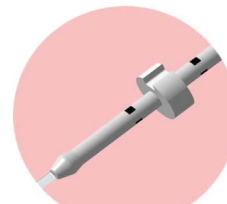
New Ultrafine Inner Transfer Catheter to minimise media volume on transfer

New Sliding Silicone Marker to allow insertion depth to be pre-set prior to transfer

Patented Finger Grip gives unequalled grip and control while ensuring accurate placing of the catheter tip

Toxicity Testing. Rigorous quality controls ensure that all sensitive materials are subject to LAL and independent single mouse embryo to blastocyst assay

Sterile. Packed in peel pouches, 10 per carton, intended for one time use



BulbTip™ slider and tip detail



TIRED OF USING MAKLER?

Now there is a cost effective, more accurate method using the Leja disposable slides

CALL FOR YOUR LEJA STARTER PACK TODAY

Starter pack includes: 4 x pks (25) 20 micron 2 chamber slides, Stop watch, Operators/training manual, 2 eye pieces with counting grid for microscopes

Conferences

**Scientists in Reproductive Technology
Annual Meeting 2008**

5-6 April

Novotel Brighton Beach, Sydney

Come and visit Simon and Ross at our booth to discuss your IVF needs

LOOKING FOR A PRODUCT?



Not sure where to start searching?

Let Gytech do the work for you
Contact us today 03 9822 5911

**Need more information?
Call Gytech on 03 9822 5911 or
visit our website www.gytech.com.au**



Janet Padgham, Director
0418 204 910
jpadgham@gytech.com.au



Simon Kent, National Sales Manager
0411 230 532
skent@gytech.com.au



Susie Bilson, Account Manager TAS
0418 204 991
sbilson@gytech.com.au



Bree Tozer, Account Manager NSW
0418 204 476
btozer@gytech.com.au



Julie Isbill, Account Manager NSW
0438 363 452
jisbill@gytech.com.au



Ross Turner, Account Manager NSW
0418 204 775
rturner@gytech.com.au



**PO BOX 76
ARMADALE NORTH 3143
VICTORIA AUSTRALIA
TELEPHONE +61 3 9822 5911
FACSIMILE +61 3 9822 4911
WWW.GYTECH.COM.AU**