

# Infertility Issues

## Surrogacy

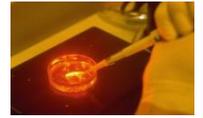
Surrogacy goes back 4000 yrs when Abraham slept with his wife's handmaiden and had Ishmael. In the UK, the law allows you to privately arrange surrogacy, but you can only pay expenses, and the surrogate mother can keep the child if she chooses, even if she is not biologically related to it (IVF).



Commercial surrogacy has taken off in India, where surrogate mothers have IVF babies for white European couples and Japanese couples, implanting up to 5 embryos at a time. Legally binding contracts mean the baby will never be the surrogate's child. The surrogate is paid well, typically the equivalent of 5 years salary. There are controversial cases where the parents split up and a child may be born an orphan.

## IVF

IVF costs around £5,000, and has a success rate of around 1 in 3 for those under 35, lower if you are older. Mary Warnock, who chaired the Committee of Inquiry into Human Fertilisation and Embryology, claims that the NHS should fund repeated attempts at IVF, but this rarely happens. As a result, poorer couples are discriminated against and many couple never become pregnant using IVF.



When UK law was written, Lady Saltoun proposed an amendment, that was narrowly defeated, prohibiting single women from having IVF. In its place, the welfare clause was added, stating that hospitals have the right to deny treatment to women if they are concerned about the welfare of any future child.

## Sperm Donation

Until 2005, sperm donors could remain anonymous in the UK. Since then, new donors face the possibility of being contacted by their biological offspring, although usually the interest is in half-siblings.



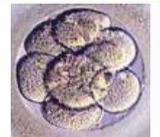
Sperm donation allows couples where a man is infertile to have children, but the 'father' would not be biologically related to the child. It also allows single women and lesbians to have children.

Sperm donors in the UK are not paid (except expenses up to £35), and their sperm can only be used 10 times.

In the 1970s, Robert Graham made a sperm bank to breed geniuses, using donors with high IQs.

## Frozen embryos

There are 500,000 frozen embryos in America alone, and only 10,000 are likely to be used. Many couples face a heart-breaking decision to stop paying for the embryos to be stored and have them destroyed. CNN reported that some parents were so traumatised by the thought of destroying the embryos that they got pregnant in their 40s.



In Natallie Evans' case, her frozen embryos were her only hope to have a child after she had cancer, but her ex-partner withdrew his consent. The European Court of Human Rights ruled that there was no breach of the right to life, but on the right to respect for private and family life and on the prohibition of discrimination the 17 judges ruled 13 to four.

## Selling eggs

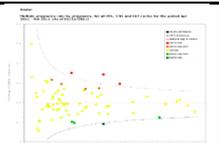
Egg donors in the UK can be paid up to £250 expenses, but some claim more should be allowed. The HFEA has set up a National Donation Strategy Group to look at ways of encouraging more donors.



Some couples feel forced to turn to buying eggs. Cyprus now has more fertility clinics per capita than anywhere else in the world. There you can buy human eggs for around £10,000 in what has become known as 'fertility tourism' - couples go on 'holiday' there and coming home pregnant.

## Multiple births

The HFEA says that "the single biggest risk of fertility treatment is multiple pregnancy. It increases the risk of stillbirth, neonatal death and disability in children."



They introduced targets for fertility clinics from 2009, recommending 'single embryo transfer' ('One child at a time'), and aiming to move away from one in five IVF pregnancies being multiple-births (20%) to the non-IVF average of one in 80. Current (2012) targets for clinics are a maximum of 10%.