

Scientists Discover Test To Identify Embryos Boosting IVF Success Rates By 50%

Angela Jones July 10, 2014



ivf success rates

Up until now, UK fertility clinics have carried out round 60,000 IVF treatments a year, but many couples have still remained childless as embryos fail to be implanted in the womb.

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According to published figures, the average IVF clinic has an average IVF success rate of just 20-30 per cent, but now fertility scientists have discovered a new means of identifying embryos that can be successfully implanted into the womb, boosting IVF success rates to around 50%. Researchers from the University of Oxford say that it is the presence of high levels of DNA from energy-producing cells in the embryo that will make an embryo fail to implant. The IVF team of scientists have discovered a threshold, or cut-off point, below which embryos would be guaranteed for a successful implant, and above which many would fail to do so, having investigated whether the amount of mitochondrial DNA found to be present in early-stage embryos would affect the chances of implantation after being transferred into the womb.

IVF research scientist Dr Elpida Fragouli, said that this newly discovered test was in effect a "new independent biomarker of embryo viability", which would help doctors to choose the embryos which were most likely to result in a successful pregnancy. She said that the majority of IVF clinics had an average success rate of between 20 & 30% of women having a baby after being treated with IVF, but that this figure could be increased to about 40% after pre-implantation genetic screening of the egg or embryo for chromosome abnormalities which are one of the major causes for miscarriages.

She went on to say that her belief was that by adding this discovery to the screening process, [success rates could increase up to anything between 50 and 60%](#), and that currently 4 or 5 IVF clinics in the UK and Spain were already implementing the new test as part of their screening procedure, and that their feedback would allow them to officially publish their findings to the international IVF community. The actual team of IVF experts led by Dr Fragouli themselves were able to take biopsies from 392 different embryos at the five day stage of development generated by couples at eight UK clinics. The team also carried out research on 87 women aged around 38 by transferring the embryo into the womb, and resulting in 44 successful pregnancies and 48 implantation failures.

Dr Fragouli told us "The findings showed high levels of mtDNA in embryos carrying genetic defects and those from older women, especially those over 40. The team found healthy embryos capable of being implanted into the womb tended to have lower levels of mtDNA than those failing to implant." She went on to explain that it was still not clear why high levels of mtDNA should affect implantation, though it was a sign that the embryo could be under stress.

High IVF costs are quite often the main barrier for a successful fertility treatment, and many UK couples are beginning to look abroad for their IVF treatment, and more specifically Spain is the most popular destination in Europe. For more information about current IVF screening procedures and embryo implantation success rates in Spain, the IVF-Spain clinic website provides everything you need to know about IVF, and can be found right here:

<http://www.ivf-spain.com>

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