



Bay IVF Experts Witness Rise in Single-by-Choice Moms

More women using in vitro fertilization for solo parenting, reflecting latest CDC report of record levels of American babies born to single mothers.

SAN RAMON, Calif., June 21 /PRNewswire/ -- The latest report of a national boom in single motherhood is being felt in Northern California, where fertility physicians are noting sharp growth in the number of women patients using assisted reproductive technology to pursue parenting without partners.

"One in 10 of my patients is now a single woman," said Susan P. Willman, M.D. reproductive endocrinologist at the Reproductive Science Center of the San Francisco Bay Area. "While fertility centers traditionally have treated couples, we are seeing a larger percent of women who would feel they have to make a choice of parenting alone or perhaps not at all."

According to a November 2006 report from the Centers for Disease Control, nearly four in 10 babies were born in the United States in 2005 to single mothers, up from 35 percent of births in 2003.

An increase in use of sperm donation reveals another indicator of the single-parenting trend. In 2005, about 60 percent of the customers of California Cryobank, the nation's largest sperm bank, were single women and/or lesbians, as compared with 40 percent in 1998, according to a report from MSNBC ("With no Mr. Right in sight, time for plan B," July 2005.)

And a Lifetime TV poll conducted in March 2006 found that 35 percent of women between 18 and 20 said they would consider having a baby without being married or in a serious relationship.

The sociological shift is evident in swelling interest of single women in in vitro fertilization (IVF), RSC's physicians say.

"More single women are coming to us to say they feel the time running out on their biological clocks," Willman said. "That's coupled with a number of medical advances that make IVF more attractive to single women, especially those who've delayed parenting for career reasons."

Among those advances in recent years, Willman notes, are:

- A dramatic rise in IVF pregnancy rates, which have roughly doubled in the last decade nationwide.
- Improvements in freezing embryos and, more recently, eggs for postponing pregnancy attempts for later.
- More creative options for financing the cost of IVF treatment.

Willman was one of 14 experts who addressed solo pregnancy and other single-mother-by-choice options at the first-ever large-scale Choice Mom Expo held April 28 in Berkeley. The event drew 100 women -- a marked contrast to the average attendance of 25 at the Single Mothers by Choice network's smaller workshops.

Not all fertility practices admit single women for treatment, although the American Society for Reproductive Medicine ethics committee states that "we believe that the ethical duty to treat persons with equal respect requires that fertility programs treat single persons and gay and lesbian

couples equally with married couples in determining which services to provide"

About Reproductive Science Center

Established in 1983, the Reproductive Science Center of the San Francisco Bay Area was one of the earliest IVF facilities in the United States, begun just two years after the nation's first successful IVF treatment. RSC was among the first in the United States to report a successful pregnancy from an egg donated from one woman to another for gestation and delivery, and was also responsible for the nation's second successful transfer of a previously frozen embryo into a mother's uterus. Today, RSC boasts a staff of six infertility physicians with a collective 85 years' experience with offices in San Ramon, Orinda, San Jose, Fremont, Modesto, Brentwood, and Monterey. The Reproductive Science Center is a member of IntegraMed, a national network of 30 fertility centers in 95 locations across the United States. One of every five IVF procedures in the United States is performed in an IntegraMed practice. For more information, visit <http://www.rscbayarea.com>.

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