

Contact: Amy Blustein

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FIRST IVM PROCEDURES RESULT IN THREE BIRTHS IN NEW ENGLAND

Advances in medicine are making it possible for women who never thought that they could conceive to now maintain a pregnancy and deliver a healthy baby. One of the latest developments in infertility treatment is in vitro maturation (IVM), a process by which immature eggs are harvested from the ovaries and matured in the laboratory.

In the past two months, three babies conceived using this new technique have been born in Rhode Island –the first three live births (one singleton born in August and one set of twins born in October) in New England of babies conceived using IVM. Both mothers are patients at the Center for Reproduction and Infertility at Women & Infants Hospital of Rhode Island, a Center for IVM Excellence as designated by its partner, SAGE In Vitro Fertilization, a CooperSurgical company.

During traditional in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment, medication is used to stimulate the production of multiple mature eggs. These eggs are then harvested and fertilized outside the body. The procedure is very time intensive because the patients need to be closely monitored.

“With IVM, less medication is used,” explained Jared Robins, MD, reproductive endocrinologist at Women & Infants Hospital and assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. “Immature eggs are retrieved and are then matured in the laboratory before fertilization. This shortens the treatment cycle and decreases the chances of some side effects from the medication.

“Because there are fewer medicines and almost no injections, the patients have less discomfort and do not need to be closely monitored,” continued Dr. Robins. “Their retrieval can be scheduled at their convenience.”

IVM is a viable option for women who are less than 38 years old, have polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), a history of hyperstimulation on fertility medications, a history of poor oocyte (egg) quality, or who are planning to have chemotherapy. There are a number of benefits to this form of treatment, including avoidance of the side effects resulting from gonadotropin stimulation; lower patient cost; less patient discomfort; and simplified treatment involving fewer medications and needles.

Women & Infants introduced the IVM program in June 2009. Since then, IVM has been used on 12 cases, resulting in five pregnancies. The miscarriage rate for IVM is approximately 20 percent, the same as with other pregnancies. The doctors and embryologists at Women & Infants are highly trained in this specialized technique, and Women & Infants is currently the only training center for SAGE In Vitro Fertilization and for teaching IVM to other doctors and technicians.

Women & Infants' Center for Reproduction and Infertility is affiliated with The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University and Tufts Medical Center. The staff provides a comprehensive approach for both male and female infertility patients with a team that includes reproductive endocrinologists, nurses, social workers, and other providers, working along with specialists in male infertility, as needed. Specialized genetic services and consultation are also provided. For more information, go to www.womenandinfants.org/infertility.

Women & Infants Hospital of Rhode Island, a Care New England hospital, is one of the nation's leading specialty hospitals for women and newborns. The primary teaching affiliate of The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University for obstetrics, gynecology and newborn pediatrics, Women & Infants is the seventh largest obstetrical service in the country with more than 9,000 deliveries per year. In 2009, Women & Infants opened the country's largest, single-family room neonatal intensive care unit. Women & Infants has been designated as a Breast Center of Excellence from the American College of Radiography; a Center for In Vitro Maturation Excellence by SAGE In Vitro Fertilization; and a Neonatal Resource Services Center of Excellence. It is one of the largest and most prestigious research facilities in high risk and normal obstetrics, gynecology and newborn pediatrics in the nation, and is a member of the National Cancer Institute's Gynecologic Oncology Group. The hospital was named Rhode Island's Best Place to Work by *Providence Business News* and a National Center of Excellence in Women's Health by the federal government. For information about Women & Infants, log on to www.womenandinfants.org, and for the name of a physician on the Women & Infants' staff, call the Health Line at 1-800-921-9299.