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Update for paragraph 5.4.2

A STUDY OF IVF IN THE USA REPORTED THAT ONLY 5% OF FRESH OOCYTES RESULTED IN THE BIRTH OF A BABY

Perhaps the most ethically problematical aspect of IVF programmes is the destruction of embryos. Yet a recent study in the USA indicates that for every 100 eggs fertilised in the laboratory, only 5 result in live births. Putting it another way, 95 are discarded, die in the Petri dish or fail to survive in the womb.

The study carried out at the Yale University School of Medicine showed that of over 7000 oocytes investigated only about 31% of the fertilized eggs became usable for transfer or freezing. One reason for the low success rate might be that only a few of the oocytes retrieved after ovarian stimulation are actually viable, or alternatively their ability to develop might be adversely affected by the culture medium employed. In women over 40 years of age, the success rate is only 1%.

Concluding that 'an overwhelming majority of oocytes retrieved, fertilized, and fully utilized do not result in the birth of a baby and are thus wasted,' the authors of the report suggest that 'the time has come to investigate new methods of oocyte viability assessment and consider changing the current ART practice to recruit fewer oocytes.'

Website reference:

<http://www.fertstert.org/article/PIIS0015028208000253/abstract?rss=yes>