The effect of in vitro fertilization on birth rates in western countries

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CONCLUSION: IVF is a medical treatment, not an effective population policy measure for raising the birth rate and helping population ageing to reverse

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DATA and METHOD

Assessing to what extent the timing of in vitro fertilization (IVF) is effective in raising the number of children (TFR)

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Spontaneous first children in the cohort of 100,000 couples wishing to have 2 children: in first year 76%, in second year 50% of still childless; in total 92% in 10 years

RESULTS

Multiple pregnancies are a serious IVF complication, leading to higher risks of prematurity, infant mortality, morbidity and cognitive and neurological problems later in life

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Medical consequences of multiple births have a greater impact on health care costs than the IVF treatment

There is agreement among IVF professionals to reduce multiple pregnancy rates by transferring fewer embryos

DISCUSSION

Natural pregnancies do not occur immediately

Immediate IVF may therefore lead to a slightly earlier pregnancy but not necessarily to an extra (life time) pregnancy, only a replacement

This limited increase does not justify the extra 55,000 IVF cycles and the almost 7000 more twin- and triplet children being born

IVF cycles are often very stressful

Multiple pregnancies are a too serious complication


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