

*Behold I am with you always, yes, to the end of time.  
Matthew 28:20*

# National Bioethics Newsletter

**Poor fertility knowledge in young women**  
(Aust NZ Jour Obs & Gyn. Dec 2017;57:412-419)

In vitro fertilization (IVF) births have been accelerating in Australia and New Zealand. While the oldest IVF child in Australia would be 38 years old, the majority are under the age of 10. **From 2010 to 2016 there had been a 21% increase in the number of IVF births.** By that year 200,000 IVF children had been born in Australia and New Zealand, @ \$40,000 taxpayer cost per live birth.

It is estimated that one in six Australian couples experience infertility, which is defined as failure to conceive after one year of unprotected sex, or recurring miscarriages.

In 2017 a NZ study of 1872 women probed the link between fertility knowledge and actually conceiving. Maximizing fertility requires accurately recognizing when ovulation occurs and understanding that the fertile window starts about 5 days earlier and ends a day after ovulation. However, this study found that less than one third of women correctly understood the timing of the 'fertile window'. Only 1.4% of women knew about the age at which their fertility declines, as well as understanding their fertile time and the likelihood of natural conception. 40% of women who had been monitoring their ovulation to conceive did not know that the best time for sex to conceive is before ovulation, and incorrectly thought the best timing was between day 14 and day 17. **Only 13% of women had sufficient natural fertility knowledge.** Although many women thought they were monitoring ovulation, their knowledge of the fertile cycle remained very poor.

This study concluded that education about the female cycle and fertility window may facilitate resolution of infertility without clinical or IVF intervention. Poor fertility knowledge, it concluded, needs to be addressed.



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'I am reminded of your sincere Faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice' 2 Tim 1:5





## “Begotten Not Made” response to growing infertility problem in USA Conference of Catholic Bishops USA

Children conceived through IVF ‘are children of God and are loved by their parents, as indeed they should be’.

In 1987 the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued ‘*Donum Vitae*’ (The Gift of Life). It reminds us that some technological means to overcome infertility do violence to the human person and to the dignity of marriage. It also reminds us that this technology can do harm to the parents and others, even as they try to do what is good and overcome infertility. Children are not a means to an end, they have a right to be engendered by a marital act of love, in cooperation with God. When several embryos are created in an IVF process only the most promising one is placed in the uterus and over 90% of those formed will perish or be frozen.

*‘The Church pays great attention to the suffering of couples with infertility. She cares for them...and encourages medical research..’* Pope Benedict XVI

*For you formed my inmost parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb*

*Ps 139:13*

*Before I formed you in the womb O knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you. I appointed you a prophet to the nations.*

*Jer 1:5*

### **Who can assist couples share in the joy of having children?**

<http://www.fertilitycare.com.au/>

‘FertilityCare combines natural fertility awareness with a medical treatment program (NaProTechnology) to help people reach full procreative health. This can be used successfully by:

- Married couples having difficulties achieving a pregnancy
- Married couples who have experienced miscarriages or ectopic pregnancy
- Women wishing to care for their own gynaecological health, including those with problems such as Pre Menstrual Syndrome, irregular cycles, unusual bleeding, polycystic ovarian syndrome, ovarian cysts, endometriosis, postnatal depression and other conditions.

Couples wanting to learn about their fertility and plan their families’

<http://billings.life/>

‘With the Billings Ovulation Method® you’ll learn to understand the signs of fertility and to recognise your Peak day, which is the most fertile day in your cycle’.

<https://www.creightonmodel.com/>

The Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System involves identifying the fertile time during a woman’s cycle. The Creighton Model is effective in achieving or avoiding pregnancy, by identifying the fertile window and cooperating with a woman’s natural fertility.



## *Infertility is not a diagnosis but an expression of combined physiological factors*

Ideal management of infertility is through a combined multifactorial approach focused on the clients. The hurried entrance into the IVF industry pathways may not best serve the interests of the would-be parents either medically or financially, nor the health of the child -to- be. Several sustained interventions are customarily the best management of any chronic condition. Infertility is no exception. Natural Procreative Technology (or NaPro Technology or NAPRO) looks at the broader range of possible diagnoses that may be contributing to a combined effect on fertility, and maximizes the reproductive health of each partner. During this time the woman records her fertility cycle in detail. From this detail the doctor can time more specific investigations more appropriately as needed to track hormones and ovarian and follicular function. A Male Factor Pack is given to the would-be father to collect semen during regular intercourse.

The aim is to restore normal function as much as is possible, followed by 12 'optimized cycles', which may take 18 to 20 months and include hormone therapy. IVF practices by contrast, are more attentive to those health factors which impact IVF effectiveness. NaPro Technology offers a safer outcome. The incidence of prematurity, multiple pregnancies and low birth weight babies is lower for NaPro conceptions than for IVF. (Stanford JB, Parnell TA, Boyle PC. Outcomes from treatment of infertility with natural procreative technology in an Irish General Practice. *J Am Board Fam Med* 2008;21:375-84).

Lord,

You know my deep desire for a child, a little one to love and to hold, to care for, to cherish. Grant that my body may conceive and give birth to a beautiful healthy baby in Your holy image. Guide me in all my choices, so that this conception, my pregnancy and my baby's birth are in line with Your will. Heavenly Father and Holy Mother hear this prayer of my heart, mind and spirit.

Amen



Pope Francis:  
 Fidelity to the Gospel of Life and respect for life as a gift from God sometimes require choices that are courageous, and so go against the current, which, in particular circumstances, may become points of conscientious objection.

November 2014.

## IVF Clinics use ‘aggressive marketing’ and provide ‘sparse information’ IVF expert Professor Alan Trounson

IVF is a large, thriving industry in Australia. Medicare pays over \$250 million annually for clients to access unlimited IVF cycles. Over 35,000 women seek in vitro fertility treatment annually. **A 2016 review of Australia’s 34 IVF clinics found the industry was rife with misleading advertising, inflating success rates in their promotion to the public.**

The Chairman of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) that year expressed concern IVF consumers were being misled. While clinics’ advertising claimed up to 90% success over 3 IVF cycles, the truth was quite different. The least successful clinic had a 4% live birth rate for each fresh IVF cycle, while the most successful clinic had a 30% live birth rate. The names of these clinics were all suppressed, so customers do not know the true success rates of their chosen vendor.

## Transfer of egg and sperm into the mother

The three recent Popes have left open the method of conception assistance known as Gamete Intrafallopian Transfer (GIFT). The baby born of this method is conceived in his or her mother’s fallopian tube, the normal place for conception. **Because the baby’s right to be conceived within her mother is upheld and there is no creation of extra, spare embryos to be subsequently discarded, this method is not considered immoral by the Church.**

GIFT begins with similar methods to IVF in that ovaries are stimulated and monitored for egg collection. The collected egg, together with sperm from natural intercourse are placed together into the fallopian tube.

The Queensland Fertility Group in Australia offer the GIFT means of assisted fertility. A fertility consultant for enquiries is available.: 1800 111 483

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Natural Fertility /NAPRO contacts

- Fertility Services, Mater Mothers’ Hospitals, Level 7, Raymond Terrace  
 South Brisbane, Queensland, 4101 phone **07 3163 8437**

[naturalfertility@mater.org.au](mailto:naturalfertility@mater.org.au)

-Dr. Catherine Lennon, Cherrybrook NSW ph. 02 88503991 or 0439 768 485.

- W.A.: Fertility Care Centres of Australasia. Dr Amanda Lamont  
[admin@fertilitycare.com.au](mailto:admin@fertilitycare.com.au)

Or contact Catholic Care in your home state.

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Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception pray for us.

Pictures from Pexels