

THE FACTS ON FERTILITY.

MARCH 2021

INFORMATION IS POWER.

The launch of the YourIVFSuccess website and how to best use this site to educate your patients.

On February 15th the Federal Minister for Health launched a new initiative; YourIVFSuccess, to better inform patients regarding infertility treatments.

yourivfsuccess.com.au contains three key pieces of information that will be useful in assisting patients make informed decisions regarding infertility treatment.

1) An online IVF success (live birth) calculator that takes into account an individual patient's age, past IVF and obstetric history and causes of infertility (if known).

This calculator has been developed by the UNSW and is based on actual IVF results in Australia. By entering these key prognostic variables, a prospective IVF patient can be given a reasonably accurate prediction of her chances of having a child from IVF treatment. For example, a couple both of 30 years of age, no children or prior IVF with male factor infertility has a 47% chance of having a baby using all the embryos (fresh and frozen embryo transfers) from one cycle of IVF treatment. Conversely, a 44-year-old woman has only a 3% chance of having a baby from IVF.

This information helps set realistic expectations for chances of success, but may also assist some poor prognosis patient to avoid IVF treatment all together.

2) In Australia there are over 80 IVF units, with 4 in South Australia. While all IVF clinics provide IVF treatment, other lesser options such as Intra-Uterine Insemination, Ovulation Induction and third-party reproduction (surrogacy, donor sperm, egg and embryo) are only available in a few clinics. The Your IVF Success website lists the various treatment options available at each clinic,

thereby allowing patients to be fully informed of their options before arriving in the clinic. Repromed is the only comprehensive ART unit in South Australia providing the full range of fertility treatments including in-house genetic testing of embryos, surrogacy, donor egg and sperm (including the Central IVF frozen egg bank and California Cryobank sperm bank), plus a donor embryo program. As such, we are optimally placed to provide whatever treatment is required, be that minimal intervention or high technology, to your patients.

3) Clinic success rates. Since 2002 all IVF units have been required to submit their live birth success rates to the NPESU at the UNSW. The purpose of this mandated database was primarily to monitor for complications (maternal and baby) in the relatively new IVF technology. However, these valuable results were hidden in a report read only by the industry, with individual IVF units success rates not being available due to the data being de-identified at publication.

It was apparent from this report that there was a huge variance in IVF success rates between clinics, sometimes as large as a 4-fold difference.

Senator Stirling Griff recognised this anomaly and has been instrumental in making this existing data publicly available so patients can compare live birth success rates between IVF units in their home state. IVF clinics with low success rates will often try to explain their results by saying they treat poorer prognosis patients



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(older, higher BMI, more past failed IVF cycles). In order to account for these potential confounders, the Your IVF Success website takes two approaches.

Firstly, it publishes the individual clinic's patient characteristics compared to national averages, allowing informed assessment of the average type of patient treated at that clinic.

Secondly, the website publishes an "ideal good prognosis" patient yardstick (first cycle of IVF, age under 38 years) for that clinic, allowing valid comparisons between clinics and the national average for a typical good prognosis patient.

This index of success is probably the best assessment of the quality of an IVF lab and its procedures.

In the first year of the Your IVF Success website individual clinics had to consent for their pregnancy success rates to be published, after having seen their results compared to a national average.



The majority of IVF units in Australia (92%) like Repromed, have consented to publication.

However, it is interesting to note that the **other established IVF units in South Australia have not consented for their results being published.**

Referring doctors and patients can draw their own conclusions regarding why these clinics have failed to comply with this Federal Government directive aimed at increasing patient information.

Repromed is proud to have our results included as we are committed to a policy of transparent and honest reporting of success rates.

Senator Griff, a South Australian Senator is quoted as being “disappointed that Fertility SA and Flinders Fertility decided against permitting their statistics to be published on the site.” He then went on to say that the website is rigorous and cannot be manipulated by clinics to game the system. Mr Griff argued that if Flinders Fertility and Fertility SA are as good as they say they should be proud to display those results on the website alongside their peers. (Advertiser 17/2/21)

Repromed agrees with these sentiments and calls on the Minister of Health to make publication of IVF success rates on the audited and externally validated YourIVFSuccess website a mandatory licence requirement to practice IVF in South Australia. Patients have a right to know not only the costs of their treatment, but also their likely chances of success at that clinic.

We would encourage referring doctors to use the YourIVFSuccess website to educate patients on likely success rates and help them make decisions on what treatment site best meets their needs.

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