

Disclaimer

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Interpreting Pregnancy Rates

Pregnancy rates are clearly the best way for an IVF Unit to advise of its success and it is appropriate for couples considering use of assisted reproductive technologies to enquire about the pregnancy rate of the centre. There are many ways of expressing pregnancy rates and some centres try to make their pregnancy rates look impressive by reporting them in certain ways.

Below I have reported the national benchmark for IVF centres in Australia as reported to the National Perinatal Statistics Unit and the Fertility Society of Australia. It is compulsory for all IVF centres to produce their statistics to this centre in order to obtain their license to run the IVF centre. Therefore good national data is available and I have compared Monash IVF Queensland's results to the most recent national benchmark available.

These pregnancy rates are expressed as pregnancies > 20 weeks gestation per 100 egg pickups. The number of egg pickups is less than the number of cycles commenced because some women will have cycles cancelled they produce too many or too few eggs or other reasons.

If a centre wished to make its pregnancies rates look better, albeit artificially, it would express the pregnancy at 6 weeks gestation (seen at ultrasound scan). Pregnancies destined to miscarry would therefore be included in the pregnancies of the unit and the pregnancy rate would look higher. For a couple who desire a baby obviously the pregnancy rate at 20 weeks gestation, which is far more likely to result in a live birth, is the most important information.

Similarly there has been a tendency in recent times to express pregnancy rate as positive (99% chance) pregnancy test at 16 days after egg pickup per embryo transfer. This is a chemical pregnancy and nearly 50% of these will never be confirmed on ultrasound scan.

If the denominator is the number of embryo transfers the pregnancy rate will be greater because the number of couples who do not have fertilisation or do not get embryos of sufficient quality to transfer will not be included. When a couple is making a decision to proceed with assisted reproductive technology with a particular centre you establish what is the numerator (the top number) and the denominator (the bottom number) of the expressed pregnancy rate. To compare apples with apples you need to make sure that the numerator is pregnancies of > 20 weeks gestation and that the denominator is the number of egg pickups. Most centres have a pregnancy rate of 45-50% using this way of expressing pregnancy rate.

[Interpreting Pregnancy Rates:](#)

Compare:

Pregnancy greater than 20 weeks / 100 egg pickups is less than 16-20%.

Pregnancy seen on ultrasound at six weeks / 100 egg pickups is less than 25% (the difference is miscarriages after 6 weeks)

Chemical pregnancy (positive pregnancy test) / 100 egg pickups is less than 40%.

Chemical pregnancy / 100 embryo transfers (positive pregnancy test) 50-60%.