

MEDIA RELEASE

WOMEN "PATIENTS" PUT AT RISK IN IVF EXPERIMENT : CALL FOR MORATORIUM ON ALL IVF.

Women's groups are outraged at the actions of the Monash Medical Centre IVF team in proceeding with microinjection experiments to create embryos for implantation into women.

A spokesperson for FINRRAGE (Feminist International Network for Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering) said today:-

"The IVF researchers are deliberately using women as experimental subjects to circumvent Victorian legislation which disallows embryo experimentation. They have dishonoured their own undertaking made in February last year to advise the state's Standing Review and Advisory Committee on Infertility about the use of new techniques and they now appear prepared to disregard their patients' welfare in proceeding with a highly experimental method. They are saying 'If we can't test the embryos, we'll use women as incubators to see if microinjection works'."

Microinjection aims to alleviate male infertility. Yet, as in all IVF procedures, it is the woman partner who undergoes potentially hazardous hormonal ovary stimulation and invasive surgery for egg collection. Professor Wood now proposes ultrasonic screening during pregnancy as an acceptable means for tracing the development of embryos created by microinjection.

"What effects do all these procedures have on women?" the spokesperson said. "How can a medical ethics committee responsibly approve a highly experimental technique? The present legislation does not protect women from abuses by IVF experimentation. The community needs to consider the implications of IVF for women. A moratorium should be imposed on all IVF, in view of this present exploitation of a loophole in the legislation. So-called routine IVF has a low success rate and a higher than normal incidence of birth defects - the use of the microinjection technique puts further pressure on women to undergo screening through the pregnancy and possible 'therapeutic' abortion of defective fetuses".

New scientific data alone should not dictate the legislative response to IVF. Professor Wood (Age Sat. April 2) argues that studies in mice have shown the technique to produce normal fetuses. Yet his colleague, Dr Alan Trounson, has said, in arguing for embryo experimentation, that evidence from mice was not sufficient to justify direct application to humans (Sept 29, 1987). They now seem prepared to see women "Patients" used as a bargaining chip in an attempt to secure proclamation of the Act.

Further information and documentation may be obtained from:-

Christine Ewing 861 7722
Sarah Ferber 710 1386
Robyn Rowland 497 3869
Brunswick 3056

FINRRAGE : P.O.-Box 62
Brunswick 3056

Women's Health Resource
Collective,
653 Nicholson St.,
North Carlton, 3054.

Women's Reproductive Technology
Resource Collective :
P.O. Box 1100,
Carlton 3053.