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Research Activity At The Health Center – How It Benefits Your Patients

Research projects that have been completed this year include work looking at ways to lower multiple pregnancy rates with IVF and the results of repeated cycles of IVF. Data to be presented at the annual meeting of the American

Society for Reproductive Medicine show that careful examination of embryos can predict which patients have a high risk for triplet pregnancies. Patients in this age group have either two or three embryos transferred. We found that when three excellent embryos are transferred that there is a high risk of triplets. These patients can have only two embryos transferred and obtain the same excellent pregnancy rates.

We also evaluated pregnancy rates in successive cycles of IVF. Patients who have not conceived after one or two cycles wonder if they should continue with treatment. We found that continued treatment results in the same pregnancy rates that are seen with the initial cycles, providing the embryo quality was good enough to warrant another attempt. In other words, when the cycle outcome was good enough in terms of egg retrieval and embryo quality to warrant another attempt, pregnancy rates remained the same. This help true regardless of patient age.

We are also involved with research projects with pharmaceutical firms. While these projects may not always result in scientific publications, they can benefit your patients in other ways. Centers involved in research may have access to new medications before they are released on the market, allowing your patients to benefit from advanced treatments not available elsewhere. Competition between pharmaceutical firms results in better patient information materials and either free medications or discounted medications. Because of the cost of these medications, this can result in significant savings to your patients. A free month of birth control pills may save your patient \$30; a free month of gonadotropins can save her up to \$3000.

We will be continuing other research projects looking at the eventual outcome of patients who have an IVF cycle cancelled because of poor responses. An exciting new area of research that we hope to begin soon will look at the possible beneficial effects of co-culturing embryos with fragments of the patients own endometrium. This technique may result in better embryo quality is some patients by exposing the embryos to cellular products secreted by endometrial cells that would be absent in standard culture media.