

# Fertility in the Headlines

It seems lately that the world of fertility—and those who inhabit it—are making more headlines than ever! Virtually every week, we get calls from media outlets around the world requesting us to comment on the latest breaking story. It's always our pleasure to oblige. After all, the more exposure scientific advances receive across the airwaves and in print, the more hope can be spread—and the more people like you can be inspired to keep the faith and soldier on.

Speaking of "Inspiration," that's the name of a new column we're debuting in this issue of *USC Fertility Success News*. We devote our first to Olympic swimmer Dara Torres, whose name, image, and dreams of gold medals aren't the only things to be splashed across TV screens, newspaper front pages, and magazine covers of late. Torres also has a moving fertility tale. And we tell it here, on page 3.



**USC Fertility Baby Reunion - 2008**

Elsewhere in this edition, we talk about USC Fertility's involvement in not just one but two Discovery Health TV specials—*I Didn't Know I Was Pregnant* and *Quads with Two Moms*—both of which were aired during the cable network's recent "Baby Week." That seven-night event was surely spurred by the incredible success of Discovery Health's hit series *Deliver Me*, which stars three physicians trained right here at USC. Read more in "Hot Topic" on the next page.

Within the walls of our own practice here in Downtown Los Angeles, we're making news of our own. We've launched four promising studies, about which you can get all the details in Fertility Focus, on the last page. To see where else we've been in the media, or to learn about where we'll be in the coming months, please see our *In the News* and *Events* sections.

And stay tuned for the biggest news of all: the unveiling of our new blog at [uscfertility.org](http://uscfertility.org) in the coming months.

By the way, we'd be remiss if we didn't mention that journalists and TV producers often contact us seeking to speak to patients who have gone through the trials, tribulations, and triumphs of assisted reproductive therapy. So if you're reading this and are thinking, "I'm ready for my close-up," please let us know so that we can add you to our growing roster of current and former patients who would be willing to share their personal stories and thereby inspire others who may just be taking the first "baby steps" on their journey.

So as we all bid goodbye to summer and look toward the fall and winter, we shift into even higher gear here at USC Fertility—where the oldest children conceived through the work of our practice turn 21 in 2008! But as the world spins ever faster forward, one constant remains: Our commitment to keep studying, learning, and teaching...to keep growing as physicians...and to helping our patients become proud parents as soon as possible.

Warm Regards,  
Richard J. Paulson, MD  
Karine Chung, MD  
Kristin A. Bendikson, MD



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# Female Fertility Experts

Anyone with even a passing passion for the miracle of birth has surely seen Discovery Health's *Deliver Me*, the hit reality TV series that revolves around a trio of female OB/GYNs who are friends and practice partners.

Just like the physicians of USC Fertility, the *Deliver Me* doctors are on staff at Good Samaritan Hospital in Downtown Los Angeles. (And here's a little inside information: The show's producers were recently at USC Fertility's office, and I am slated to make an appearance on the show early next year.)

But back to the point at hand. Thanks to the success of *Deliver Me*, female fertility experts seem to be the next big thing. But here at USC Fertility, that new trend is old hat. While it's true that female reproductive endocrinologists are still a rarity in the field—and that most practices around the country would be hard-pressed to reveal a single one on their staff—here at USC Fertility, we have two!

Our very own Karine and Kristin are also pals, working moms, and practice partners. They've even been featured on their own Discovery Health TV special, *I Didn't Know I Was Pregnant*, which aired multiple times as part of the network's "Baby Week" last June and July.

Karine and Kristin's involvement with that program has led to Karine being interviewed by *Plum Magazine*, and to Kristin not only appearing live on *Good Morning America* but being the subject of a profile in her community newspaper, *The Santa Monica Daily Press*.

Most exciting of all, both Karine and Kristin are currently involved in new promising studies. Please see Fertility Focus on the last page for more information.

Adding to all this, Kristin and Karine have begun making themselves available (individually or jointly) to give a "FertiliTalk" to local women's groups. Are you part of a professional association of women whose members may have questions about fertility? Would you like to host an informational evening at your offices or regular meeting place? If so, please contact us at 213.975.9990.

The bottom line is that at USC Fertility, we are pleased to be a full-service practice that prides itself on being able to give women a choice as to the gender of their treating physician.

*Dr. Richard Paulson*



*Dr. Richard Paulson*

## SUCCESS RATES

We are proud to unveil our latest success rates, which are a testament to our continued dedication to expanding the possibilities for each and every one of our patients.

Woman's Age	2005	2006	2007	2008*
< 35	50%	34%	42%	40%
35-39	41%	48%	35%	56%
40+	32%	18%	28%	27%
Donor Egg (All Ages)	63%	47%	65%	67%
Egg Freezing (=35)	56% (10/18)	No transfers during this time period	100% (2/2)	100% (1/1)

Please call us for frozen embryo transfer success rates, which are approximately 2/3 those of fresh cycles.

\*Updated periodically

## BIRTHS!

Check out a few of the many recent additions to the USC Fertility Family:



1



2



3



4



5



6

### LIAM [1]

Born to mother Shelley

### NICHOLAS & SOPHIA KAKES [2]

Born July 3, 2007 to Richard and Iva Kakes

### ATHENA ELENA TREWYN [3]

Born January 11, 2008 to Yianna and Jason Trewyn

### SHEA [4]

Born to Julie Ruhlin and Cheryl Madden

### ANNIKA [5]

Daughter of Leslie

### ALESSIO [6]

Born March 6, 2007 to Andrea and Camille Favilli

If you would like your newest arrival to be pictured in an upcoming issue of *USC Fertility Success News*, please send an email to [Reception@USCFertility.org](mailto:Reception@USCFertility.org).

In each issue of *USC Fertility Success News*, we will answer a patient's question related to a specific fertility-related topic. This issue's question pertains to preparing for pregnancy, and is being answered by **Dr. Kristin Bendikson**.

**Q:** What do I need to do to prepare for pregnancy?

**Dr. Bendikson:** Many women don't realize that maintaining good health can affect not only pregnancy but your ability to conceive as well.

The first step is to eliminate any unhealthy habits. Cigarettes have been linked to infertility, miscarriages, preterm birth and low-birth-weight infants. Alcohol has been connected to miscarriages and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Although it's fine to ingest small amounts of caffeine, large amounts have been linked to increased miscarriage rates. Make sure that you're not coming into contact with any chemicals or toxins that could be harmful.

You should optimize both nutrition and weight before conceiving. Being underweight can lead to infertility and low-birth-weight babies. Obesity has also been linked to infertility and increased miscarriage rates. In addition, excess weight can lead to many problems during

pregnancy, including high blood pressure, diabetes, and overweight infants. If you exercise, keep it up. Maintaining a fitness routine during pregnancy is beneficial.

It's important to take a multi-vitamin with folic acid before you conceive, since this has been proven to decrease the risk of neural tube defects. But make sure not to take too many vitamins, and discuss any herbal or nutritional supplements with your doctor.

If you have any medical conditions, review them with your obstetrician. Some diseases will require special care during pregnancy, and because they may be harmful to your baby, some medications may need to be discontinued. You should also check to see if your vaccinations are up to date. It's important to make your obstetrician aware of your family history and ethnic background, as certain diseases can be inherited. Testing may be recommended.

Preparing your body for pregnancy is an important first step in your journey to become a parent.

*If you would like to submit a question for an upcoming issue of USC Fertility Success News, please send an email to [doctors@USCFertility.org](mailto:doctors@USCFertility.org).*

## INSPIRATION

### Dara Torres

One famous face who has used her visibility to comfort and inspire others is Olympic swimmer Dara Torres, 41, the self-described "old lady" of the U.S. team who made a definite splash at the recent Summer Games of the XXIX Olympiad.

Going into Beijing, Torres was already the oldest female swimmer in Olympic history and the first U.S. swimmer to compete in five Olympic games. But by claiming a silver medal in the 400-meter freestyle relay early on in the Games, she broke a century-old record to become the oldest Olympic swimming medal-winner of either gender. This after returning to the sport professionally following a six-year absence.

But that should come as a surprise to no one. Faith, persistence, defying odds, and breaking records are nothing new for Torres.

Back in the early 2000s, despite being in the best physical condi-

tion of her life, the then-thirty-something athlete failed to conceive naturally. She underwent treatment—unsuccessfully at first—but kept at it. She never gave up. She always believed.

In the fall of 2005, with partner David Hoffman (a reproductive endocrinologist who completed his residency and fellowship here at USC) by her side, Torres finally became pregnant and gave birth to the couple's beloved daughter Tessa Grace in April of 2006.

As a former spokesperson for the AFA, Torres gave hope to countless couples by discussing her personal experience. "I think I've shown that you don't want to put an age limit on your dreams," she said as she hoisted herself out of the pool after having just qualified for the U.S. team over last July 4th weekend.

Dara, we couldn't have said it better.

## FERTILITY FOCUS

### Our Most Recent Studies

Part of being affiliated with one of the most prestigious institutions of higher learning is our mission to being forward thinking pioneers, to discovering new technologies, and to making groundbreaking advances. Since Dr. Chung and Dr. Bendikson aren't just physicians and educators but also researchers, each is currently spearheading exciting new studies. Read on...

#### Ovarian Tissue Freezing Prior to Chemotherapy or Radiation Therapy

Led by Dr. Chung, this study will collect ovarian tissue for cryopreservation, examine the safety and efficacy of freezing, and test the feasibility of using a novel 3-dimensional system of maturation for immature follicles in the laboratory.

#### The Effects of hCG on Endometrial Receptivity During Assisted Reproduction

Led by Dr. Bendikson, this study will explore the endometrial response to human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG), which is known to have a role in preparing the endometrium for implantation.

#### ZIFT vs. Traditional Embryo Transfer for Women of Advanced Maternal Age

Led by Dr. Bendikson, this study is the first to examine the efficacy of zygote intrafallopian transfer (ZIFT) in women of advanced maternal age. The objective is to compare pregnancy outcomes in infertility

patients of advanced maternal age undergoing ZIFT compared with those receiving standard IVF-ET.

#### Evaluation of Oocyte Vitrification (Egg-Freezing)

USC Fertility is already an expert at the method of slow-freezing human oocytes, and another live birth (triplets!) has occurred just recently. However, as we move ahead to optimize egg-freezing technology for our patients, we feel that exploration of the very rapid form of freezing ("vitrification") is worthwhile. Therefore, the objective of this study, led by Dr. Bendikson, is to evaluate the safety and efficacy of this new egg-freezing system.

*For more information on these studies, please visit our website. Under the "Clinical Research" tab, click "Current Studies."*



Dr. Karine Chung



Dr. Kristin A. Bendikson

## IN THE NEWS

National and international media regularly turn to USC Fertility physicians for expert information and commentary on reproductive health issues. And throughout the year, we make news of our own! A complete list of press releases, interviews, and media coverage is available in our Web site "Press Room" at [USCFertility.org](http://USCFertility.org). Highlights include:

### August 11, 2008: *Mad Men*, AMC

Dr. Paulson consults with the writer-producers of the hit series—set in the advertising world of New York City in the 1960s—about pregnancy testing and other protocols in 1962.

### August 4, 2008: *The Early Show*, CBS

Dr. Paulson is interviewed for a segment in the show's "Medical Miracles" series about the controversial use of the supplement DHEA to improve fertility in women over the age of 40.

### July 29, 2008: *Good Morning America*, ABC

Dr. Bendikson is interviewed live in Los Angeles by Robin Roberts in New York City on a segment dealing with women who go into labor and give birth without ever having realized they were pregnant.

### Summer/Fall Issue of *Plum Magazine*

Dr. Chung is interviewed about predicting fertility for this magazine dedicated to pregnant women over the age of 35.

### July 14, 2008: *The Santa Monica Daily Press*

Thanks to the heightened profile brought by her appearance on Discovery Health's *Baby Week* TV special *I Didn't Know I Was Pregnant*, Dr. Bendikson is profiled in her community newspaper.

### June 15, 2008, *The South-Florida Sun-Sentinel*

Dr. Chung is interviewed about sperm- and egg-freezing.

### June 9, 2008: *Quads with Two Moms*, Discovery Health

Dr. Paulson is featured on this "Baby Week" TV special about a same-sex couple where both moms are pregnant with twins.

### June 8, 2008: *I Didn't Know I Was Pregnant*, Discovery Health

Dr. Chung and Dr. Bendikson are both featured on this "Baby Week" TV special that focuses on the astounding phenomenon where women who didn't even know they were pregnant go into labor and give birth.

### May 14, 2008: *ScienceNews.com*

Dr. Paulson is interviewed for a story titled *Identifying Viable Embryos*, about the fingerprinting of embryos.

### April 1, 2008: *ABCNews.com*

Dr. Paulson is interviewed for a story titled *Baby Carriers: Cold Cash or Warm Heart? Military Wives Can Make Ideal Surrogate Mothers*.

### NEW ON THE WEB

The one-stop-shop to find out all the latest news about us—and about the field of fertility in general—is our website, at [USCFertility.org](http://USCFertility.org).

Some of you may have already noticed changes on our site, such as various alerts and notices popping up from time to time. Thanks to new technology, it is now possible for us to update our web content in a flash. So keep visiting the site, and we promise to keep posting all the latest news about scientific advances, upcoming special events, recent media coverage, or maybe just the most recent baby picture or two.

We'd also like you to stay tuned to our website in the coming months as we prepare for the arrival of our new weekly blog. Regularly updated postings will keep you abreast of the state of the ART, what we're thinking, what we've been learning, and where we're going.

## EVENTS

### November 8-12, 2008

Dr. Paulson (who is a member of the board of directors of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine), Dr. Chung, Dr. Bendikson, and USC Fertility staff attend the ASRM's 64th Annual Meeting, "Bridge to the Future of Reproductive Medicine," at the Moscone Convention Center in San Francisco, California.

### October 18, 2008

Dr. Paulson, Dr. Chung, and Dr. Bendikson attend RESOLVE's "17th Annual Fall Fertility & Adoption Symposium" in Los Angeles. Dr. Chung co-presents "East Meets West" with Brandon Horn, JD, PhD(c), L.Ac., of L.A.'s Eastern Center for Complementary Medicine. Dr. Bendikson presents "Poor Responder: The Right Stimulation Protocol for You."



### July 12-16, 2008

Dr. Paulson makes a presentation on oocyte donation at "The 21st Annual In Vitro Fertilization & Embryo Transfer: Comprehensive Update 2008" in Santa Barbara, California. This continuing medical education course is a very popular yearly event sponsored by UCLA.

### July 6-9, 2008

Dr. Paulson, who is deputy editor of the scientific journal *Fertility & Sterility*, attends "The 24th Annual Meeting of the European Society of Human Reproduction & Embryology" in Barcelona, Spain.

### May 10, 2008

More than 250 former patients and their family members join the physicians and staff of USC Fertility for its second Baby Reunion. The event is held on the Saturday before Mothers Day in Lacy Park in San Marino. The oldest child in attendance is twelve-and-a-half; the youngest guests are three-week-old twins (see below).

