

1127 Wilshire Boulevard, 14th Floor
Los Angeles, California 90017

Tel: 213-975-9990
Fax: 213-975-9997

USCFertility.org

Contact: David Eng Communications
Los Angeles: Daniel Vaillancourt
323.969.8900 or daniel@decpr.com
New York: Gina Ravosa Miller
212.714.3537 or gmliller@decpr.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Physicians Report Nation's First Pregnancy with Triplets through Egg Freezing Keck School of Medicine researchers are conducting first-of-its-kind study

LOS ANGELES (June 15, 2005)—Fertility researchers from the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California have achieved America's first pregnancy of triplets resulting from frozen eggs.

It is the first triplet pregnancy in the world using a woman's own frozen eggs.

Physicians from USC Fertility, a nonprofit fertility practice at USC, implanted the fertilized eggs as part of an ongoing clinical trial. The physicians have a 20-year background in cryopreservation: In 1986, USC doctors achieved the conception of America's first baby born after embryo freezing, and in 1987, reported the first triplet pregnancy after frozen embryo transfer.

John K. Jain, M.D., associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the Keck School, is principal investigator on the self-funded study to examine the viability of egg freezing. Richard J. Paulson, M.D., professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the Keck School and director of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology's division of reproductive endocrinology and infertility, is co-investigator.

Jain notes that the technology is needed for women who might otherwise have no way to conceive a child. "Many young women diagnosed with cancer lose their fertility through cancer treatment. They lose their ability to have children in the future," Jain says. "Some women also undergo early menopause. This gives them the chance to still have a family."

The USC study is designed to evaluate the efficiency of egg freezing. Patients in the study are volunteers who need in vitro fertilization (IVF) to conceive and who have agreed to have all their eggs frozen. The eggs are kept in liquid nitrogen (-196 degrees Celsius), then they are thawed, inseminated and placed back in the patient's uterus.

Los Angeles resident Silvia Fajardo, a 31-year-old infertile woman, is expected to deliver her fraternal triplets in early 2006. She and her husband, Eric Alberto Urzua, 28, are part of the USC trial, which is the first of its kind. Researchers plan to release initial results from their study in late 2005.

"This study is very important for anyone who is longing for a family," says Fajardo. "We know there are many families in the world, who have spent so many years, so many sad times hoping for a family. This kind of treatment can make their dreams come true, as it did ours."

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