

That is, as long as she has a uterus — and money. It costs about \$20 to \$100 a month for Clomid treatments. Pergonal is more expensive at about \$1,000 to \$2,000, and the cost of additional surgical treatments goes up from there.

Women for whom drugs like Clomid and Pergonal are unsuccessful, or who have more extensive damage to their fallopian tubes, may be eligible for a relatively new procedure called gamete intra-fallopian transfer.

This procedure, nicknamed GIFT, uses drugs such as Pergonal to stimulate several eggs to develop in the ovaries at the same time. The woman is then given a laparoscopy examination in which a tube is inserted through the belly-button to see inside the abdomen. A fine needle is then inserted into her ovaries, and the eggs taken out and sent to a nearby laboratory.

In the lab, a technician mixes a small amount of the husband's sperm with the eggs. This mixture is placed in a special catheter that is then injected into the end of the woman's fallopian tube.

Kaplan said a woman who goes through the whole procedure of stimulation and laparoscopy has about a one-third chance (30 to 35 percent) of pregnancy. The GIFT procedure costs about \$3,500.

In another procedure similar to GIFT, called invitro-fertilization (IVF), a woman goes through the same procedure of egg stimulation and laparoscopy. However, after the eggs and sperm are mixed in the lab, they are allowed to grow for 48 hours and then placed directly into the woman's uterus through the vagina.

According to Kaplan, IVF has a success rate of about 20 to 25 percent and can cost up to \$5,000.

The GIFT and IVF procedures are performed in Oregon at the Oregon Health Sciences University in Portland, said Kaplan. The procedures also are performed successfully in Seattle, Wash., San Francisco, Calif., and most other major cities in the United States.

Physicians are enthusiastic about a newer, more experimental procedure that Kaplan calls, "for lack of a better name," embryo transfer. The procedure, developed by Los Angeles physician John Buster, is used to treat women who have seriously damaged fallopian tubes, or who do not have ovaries.

In embryo transfer, a donor woman is artificially inseminated with sperm from the husband of the infertile couple. A few days later, a tube is inserted into the cervix of the donor woman, and the uterus is "washed." By washing the uterus, the tiny embryo in the donor woman can be removed and is then placed in the uterus of the infertile woman.

Embryo transfer is still experimental, but Kaplan estimated its cost to be about \$4,000 to \$5,000. Although only about 10 babies have been born using this procedure, Kaplan expects it to become more

common in the future, he said. The procedure is revolutionary because it allows a woman with serious tubal damage or no ovaries to become pregnant and avoids surgery and procedures like laparoscopy.

Kaplan cited the similarity of embryo transfer to artificial insemination, in that a woman is gestating, or receiving an egg which is not her own, yet she carries the pregnancy and gives birth to a baby that is genetically her husband's.

Procedures like GIFT, IVF and embryo transfer also have what Kaplan calls "spin-offs," or other applications to reproductive research:

•**Embryo Freezing** — When a woman is given the

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— Paul Kaplan

drugs in an IVF procedure to stimulate egg production, she can produce as many as 12 eggs. However, only four embryos are put back inside the uterus to avoid cases of multiple births. Kaplan said now, in some cases, the extra eggs are fertilized and the embryos are frozen. If the woman does not become pregnant the first month, the remaining embryos are thawed out and implanted. In this way, a repetition of the laparoscopy procedure is avoided.

Embryo freezing can better facilitate the embryo transfer procedure. At present, physicians must use hormone treatments in order to get a donor woman and infertile woman to cycle together so the timing is right for the embryo to continue growing after it is transferred.

"If you could take the embryo out and freeze it, you could save it until the timing is perfect, or even ship it to another state in order to facilitate the process," Kaplan said.

A Los Angeles team headed by Dr. Richard Mars has produced three successful pregnancies from frozen embryos.

•**Sperm washing for intro-uterine insemination** — Developed for couples in which the male has a low sperm count or low motility or the woman has abnormal cervical mucus. The sperm of the male can be

concentrated and injected inside the uterus of the woman.

•**Sperm sex separation** — The sperm is put in a preparation that causes the male and female sperm to separate. Kaplan said doctors using this technique have a 65 percent success rate in predicting the sex of an infant.

•**Medical treatment** — In a couple where either partner may be the carrier of a genetic disease, the IVF process potentially could be used to inject the section of DNA that carries the disease and allow the baby to be born healthy.

Kaplan admitted these procedures are not free of controversy.

"There are people who believe that all this is meddling with God's work and that none of the techniques and research should be allowed," he said.

Kaplan said one of the reasons the GIFT procedure was developed was because the IVF procedure, in which the egg is fertilized outside the womb, is objectionable to some religious organizations. But with GIFT, the actual fertilization takes place in the mother's body.

At the other extreme, said Kaplan, there are scientists who believe there should be no restrictions on reproductive research of any kind. Kaplan cited cloning as an example of this controversial research, in which technicians divide an embryo, grow it into two embryos, and divide it again, to make two identical organisms.

"This is being done with animals fairly commonly today, and theoretically could be done with humans, too," Kaplan said.

For some people, like Susan, it's just a question of practicality.

"I've had the experience of having a child," said Susan. "It's not that I really have a desire for that experience."

But, she said, her partner and she want a baby, and babies are very difficult to adopt.

However, if the Pergonal treatments are unsuccessful, Susan said adoption will be their next step.

"I know there are other experimental procedures I could be eligible for, but that's further than I want to go," she said.

"My own personal feeling," said Kaplan, "is that the desire to have a child is a very basic and important right of couples."

He said he can remember a time, 10 years ago, when the issues seemed more black and white. But as reproductive technology has developed, so have the many gray areas surrounding the issues.

"When you're face-to-face with a couple who have been trying to have a child for years, who would do anything emotionally or financially to have a child, and you know you can help them... it really tests your convictions about what's right and what's not."

Ethics

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couple being able to choose the sex of their child — there is an equal chance that the knowledge may be used destructively.

Hitler, for example, subscribed to the idea and used it to justify the extinction of Jews during the Holocaust. Eugenics also influenced the formulation

of Cultural Darwinism (the theory that the rich are rich because they have superior genes) and led to statements like Benjamin Flower's assertion that bad heredity created lust which created prostitution. According to Flower, prostitution could be prevented if prostitutes were kept from reproducing and replenishing

their ranks.

While this type of reasoning is naive and faulty, the question still remains whether or not genetic manipulation is a safe and ultimately moral idea. Should couples be allowed to choose the sex of their child? What about eye color and other physical traits?

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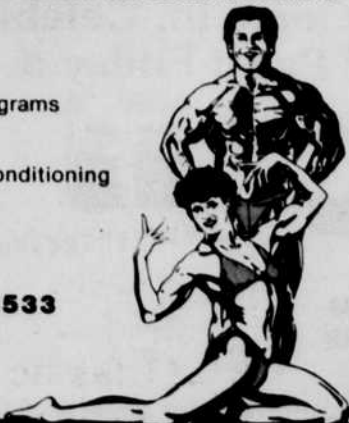
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