

Institut Marquès presents at the European Society of Human Reproduction the results of the first study in patients regarding this subject.

## **Infertility is a taboo subject depending on where you live**

- **Half of all European infertile couples find that treatments are not socially acceptable**
- **71% of Italians, 56% Irish and 60% German patients feel that fertility treatment is taboo whereas only 36% of British patients and 33% of Spanish patients feel that way.**
- **The differences between the countries can be explained by their different legislative frameworks, and their religious and cultural traditions.**
- **Half of patients discuss the issue of infertility with their family, but without giving any details about the type of treatment.**

Barcelona, 30th June 2014

Infertility is viewed very differently within the different European countries. The majority of Italians, Irish and German patients feel that fertility treatments are not socially acceptable or taboo whereas only 36% of British patients and 33% of Spanish patients feel that way.

This is one of the main conclusions of the study *Is infertility a taboo subject? Attitudes towards infertility in different countries*, completed by Institut Marquès and presented today at the European Society of Human Reproduction (ESHRE) that takes place in Munich.

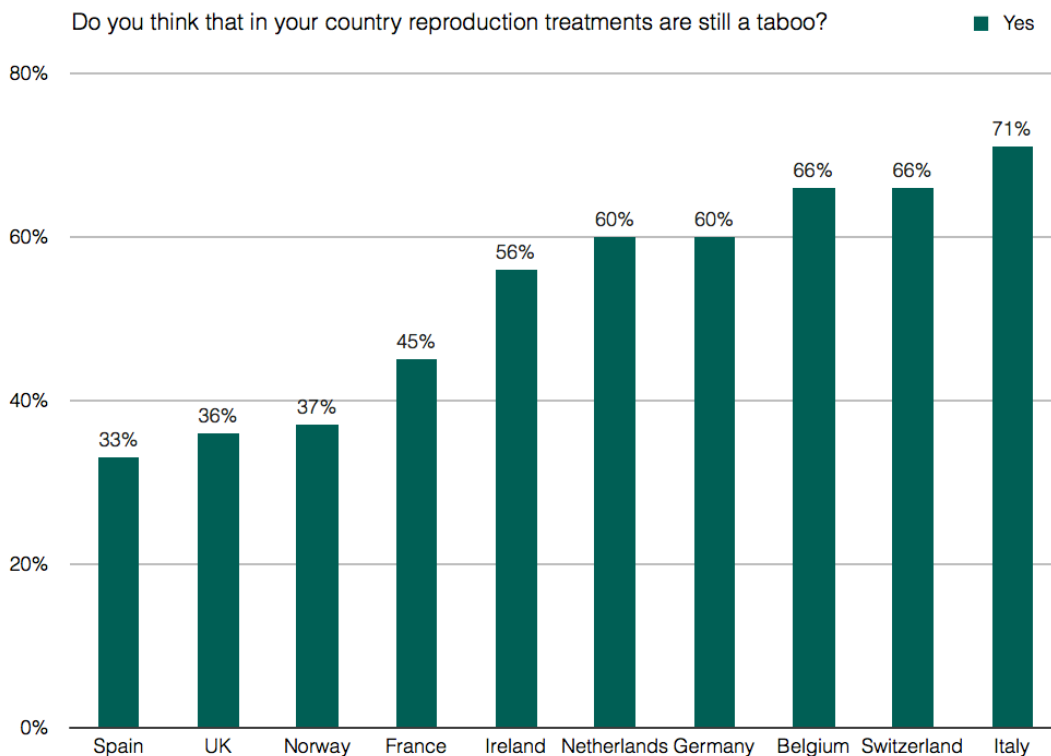
The study analysed the opinions of 952 patients from 10 countries. The patients were given a questionnaire on the day of their embryo transfer, and were asked about the extent to which they discuss their fertility with friends and family in their own country.

The study showed that wherever they live, and independently of legal restrictions or cultural and religious traditions that exist in their country, couples with infertility all have a common need: to share their problem with their nearest family. However, in general this is done without explaining in detail the type of treatment they have completed.

## Differences according to the countries

The social context of infertility is linked to the cultural and religious tradition in each country, and is also affected by the legislative framework that is in place.

A great variety of legislation exists in Europe: for example, in Italy or Germany certain fertility techniques are illegal, and therefore the couples who choose these treatments need to live with a degree of secrecy, whereas in Great Britain or Spain, where treatments for infertility are not only legal but in some cases paid for by the public purse, infertility is much more socially visible.



## Sharing infertility – minimal information, and only in the closest circles

According to the study presented today, 8 out of 10 British couples had explained to those closest to them that they were having treatment: 16% had spoken with family members, close friends and work colleagues, 40% just with family and friends, and 44% only with their family.

Sharing the information had made them feel better, provided it was shared only with close friends and family; few (16%) British patients discussed their experience in online boards and on social networks. And if requested to tell their story in public, only half of patients would be willing to do so, and only providing the details of the treatment itself were not given.

According to Dr Walker, fertility specialist at Institut Marquès, “some patients are wary of discussing their infertility with others because they don’t know if they might need egg or sperm donation. If they do need these treatments, and people are aware of that, they worry this could impede the acceptance of the child into their closest circles. Furthermore, if donation were used, they may be undecided as to whether or not they would tell the child created. If they have already told others then that decision could be taken out of their hands. So we advise patients to tell people they are having treatment, but not to give details, simply requesting support, discretion and respect, without judgement or unhelpful comments”.

### **Institut Marquès**

Founded 90 years ago, Institut Marquès is an international referral centre at the forefront of its industry, specialising in Assisted Reproduction, Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Institut Marquès employs over 100 specialists who have helped patients from over 50 countries realise their dream of becoming a parent. Techniques used at Institut Marquès’ centres in Barcelona, Dublin and London, include IVF, Egg Donation, Embryo Adoption and Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis.