

The data is published at the ESHRE Congress taking place in Istanbul from June 1st to 4th

Couples from the United Kingdom and Ireland come to Spain to adopt embryos

- **Institut Marquès presents the 500th birth due to the Embryo Adoption Programme at the European Society of Reproduction Congress (ESHRE)**
- **Embryo Adoption was initiated in 2004 to give frozen embryos in Spanish centres the opportunity to live**
- **According to Spanish legislation, if a couple disengages from its frozen embryos, the clinic keeps their custody and can donate them to other patients**

Barcelona, June 26th 2012.-

Embryo adoption and donation is an effective treatment for an everyday greater number of patients, as well as an opportunity to live for all those embryos gathered in fertility centres. This is one of the main conclusions included in Institut Marquès' work, which will be presented the following days at the [ESHRE](#) (European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology) Congress taking place in Istanbul.

According to this study, ever since the world pioneer [Embryo Adoption Programme](#) was initiated by Institut Marquès in 2004 and up until April 30th, 2012, 550 children have already been born in 28 different countries.

"It's exciting to think about the origin of every embryo and how fate takes each to a different woman, the enthusiasm and the hope they breathe during the very moment they come together... Behind each case lies a story of failures in previous treatments. Many had given up the idea of becoming parents because they morally didn't contemplate this option," comments Dr. Marisa López-Teijón, Head of the Assisted Reproduction Service at Institut Marquès and promoter of the initiative.

Sarah's case, birth number 500

Last December 31st, Institut Marquès' Embryo Adoption Programme's birth number 500 took place in Oxford, London. A girl named Sarah came to this world after two embryos were transferred to her mother at the centre in Barcelona and one of these

implanted. These embryos were frozen in Institut Marquès' laboratory. They were formed during a treatment undergone by a couple who, like many others, didn't state what future they wanted for their embryos and, as stated in the informed consent signed at the beginning of the treatment, were left under the centre's custody.

"I never felt the embryo belonged to another person, I always felt it would be my baby," asserts Lauren, Sarah's mother. "It's funny because people tell me she looks just like me, she's exactly how I expected her to be!" In Lauren's case, being 40 years old, embryo adoption worked after undergoing two previous insemination and two other In Vitro Fertilization cycles in Great Britain. "My message is clear: if you really want to have children don't keep putting it off, or you might find it's too late," she comments while she holds her child.

550 babies born in 28 different countries

Like Lauren, many other women are now mothers in Spain, Italy, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Switzerland, Norway, Holland, Ireland, Belgium, Bulgaria, Sweden, Austria, Finland, Mexico, USA, Australia, Algeria, Guatemala, Canada, Singapore, Russia, Albania, Morocco, Antilles, Greece, Romania, and Denmark thanks to embryo adoption.

According to the information that will be presented next July 2nd at the ESHRE 2012 European Fertility Congress, ever since January 2004 and up until April 2012, 1,820 transfers have been performed, giving place to 700 pregnancies and 550 born children, as recorded on April 30th 2012, whilst expecting 104 other babies who are on their way.

Thus, the chances of pregnancy per embryo transfer are of 38.5%, with a 13% rate of evolutive twin births.

Frozen embryos are given a chance to live

In 2004, Institut Marquès created the first Embryo Adoption Programme worldwide. This initiative sparked from the centre's restlessness and responsibility over the future of the frozen embryos that remained in the In Vitro Fertilization laboratory.

As Dr. Marisa López-Teijón recalls, "we decided to give all the frozen embryos with high pregnancy potential the chance to live and give all those that weren't suitable for transfer to research."

Nine months after the Programme was initiated, Gerard, a boy who is about to turn 7 today, was born in Barcelona. His mother adopted him when he still was a four-cell embryo who had been frozen for years in Institut Marquès' IVF Laboratory.

Five months later another baby was born from an embryo that had been frozen 13 years before. This case was published in [Reproductive Biomedicine](#) for its high scientific interest, as it was a new record for its frozen state permanence.

Which embryos can be adopted?

The embryos suitable for adoption come from patients who donate them to other couples, or else from patients who disengage from their future - those who don't reply to the numerous letters the centre sends them during a four year period. According to Spanish legislation, if the couple hasn't given an answer once this period has ended, the embryos become available to the centre, who will decide upon their future (either conservation, research, donation or destruction).

Adopted embryos also come from patients who have undergone an In Vitro Fertilization cycle but don't wish to vitrify the surplus embryos and, thus, decide to donate them "fresh" to other couples.

In any case, according to Spanish legislation, adopted embryos come from healthy couples and women under age 35.

Half the adoptions are for medical reasons and the rest for social purposes

According to the study Institut Marquès presents at the ESHRE Congress, 50% patients who request embryo adoption do so for sterility problems (ovarian factor, severe male infertility or previous failures using other reproduction techniques) whilst the rest are single women who desire to become mothers, or else couples in waiting lists for child adoption.

How is an embryo adopted?

An embryo adoption treatment is simpler and more affordable than an In Vitro Fertilization.

First, the woman's uterus is prepared to receive the embryos with pessaries that are applied on the skin and vaginal tablets. After a few days, the centre proceeds to thaw and transfer the embryos, no hospitalization required. 14 days later, the pregnancy test is performed and, from that very moment, it becomes a regular gestation.

Embryo adoption doesn't require official adoption processing, only the signature of an informed consent in which the couple or woman acknowledge explicitly their knowledge about the scope of the technique.

The chances of pregnancy with this procedure lie around 40% per trial or cycle.