

The first IVF baby to be created in the presence of music is born in the UK

- * Music in incubators improves fertilisation rate**
- * Couples in the UK and in 16 other countries have had successful IVF treatment with the help of this innovation**
- * Dr Victoria Walker will be at The Fertility Show in London to discuss this and other technological advances on 02/11/13**

Meet Freddie, he moves, gurgles and plays like any other baby his age, but his relationship with music goes further than other babies, as Freddie is the first British IVF first baby exposed to music at the time of his fertilisation.

His parents Isabelle and Stephen, a couple from Liverpool, came to Institut Marquès- a tertiary care referral centre in Barcelona, treating couples who struggle to fall pregnant natural - after a number of miscarriages and a failed cycle of IVF in the UK.

Earlier this year, Institut Marquès unveiled groundbreaking research, which showed that playing music during IVF fertilisation increased the chances of success by almost 5%.

Doctors at Institut Marquès analysed 985 embryos from 114 different patients. The eggs from each patient were divided into two groups which were kept in two different incubators: one with a loud speaker system and the other in a conventional incubator. The result showed that those in incubators with music improved their fertilisation rate by 4.8%.

Institut Marquès' Dr. Victoria Walker said: "We always try to recreate the environment and natural conditions of the female body from the moment the sperm moves to meet the egg. We maintain the same temperature, light and oxygen levels that exist naturally, for instance, we work in low light.

"The great challenge was to mimic the movements of the fallopian tube and uterus. Some groups have done this by applying mechanical vibrations to the culture dishes, but we decided to use music as the source of vibration."

The doctors at Institut Marquès place ipods in the incubators and play an eclectic mix of music to the eggs that included the songs of pop stars like Michael Jackson and Madonna, rock music from the likes of Nirvana and Metallica, as well as classical music by Bach, Mozart and Vivaldi.

Freddie's parents said: "After continually struggling to conceive naturally, a doctor recommended Institut Marquès to us and we decided to give it a go. We were amazed to learn that our son had actually been the first child born in the UK using this technique! This was a very exciting discovery for us, as we are both huge music lovers. From early on we noticed he was hugely drawn to music. He always loved being sung to and seemed more relaxed when music was being played.

"We hope that when we tell Freddie about the musical element of his beginnings and the fact that he was at the forefront of this ground-breaking research it will help him feel extra special."

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.