

Institut Marquès presents a study on the social consideration of infertility at the Congress of the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology

Infertility in Europe is taboo and is on the rise

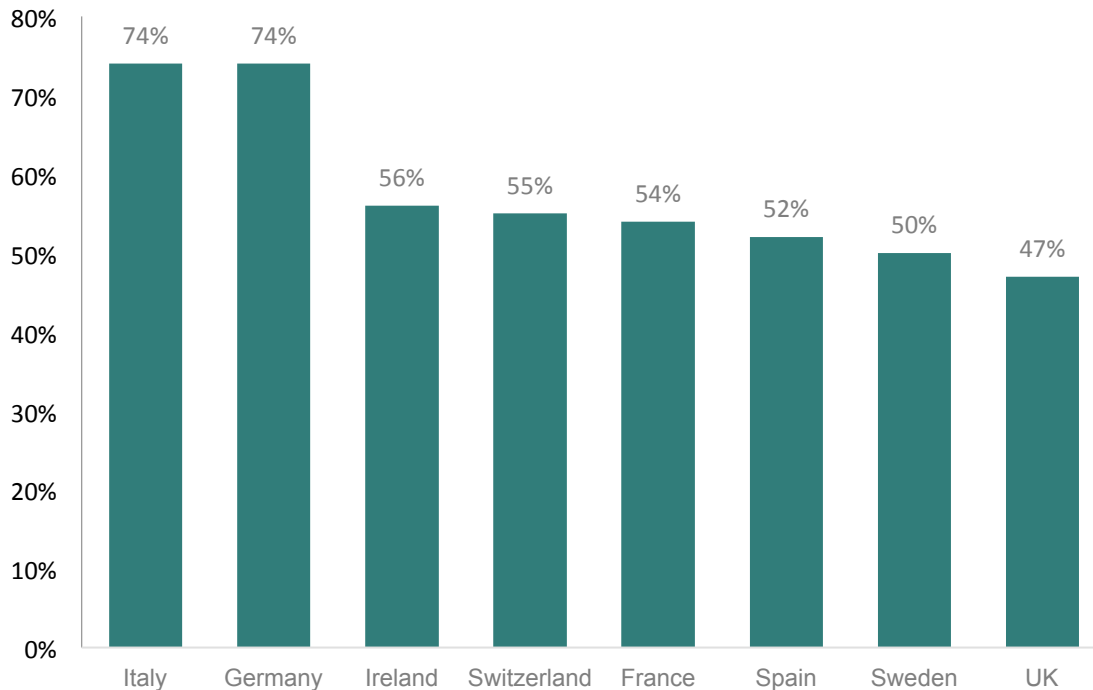
- In Europe, 63% of people with fertility issues experiences it in an environment of social rejection. Five years earlier 52% expressed this view.
- Although more than 9 million children have been born thanks to assisted reproduction, these treatments remain a taboo subject
- The perception is different depending on the country and its laws, as well as on its cultural and religious tradition

Barcelona, July 2020.- In the last five years the social perception of infertility in Europe has clearly worsened: although in 2014 52% considered this issue to be taboo, today this percentage exceeds 63%. This is one of the conclusions of one of [the studies that Institut Marquès presented in the 36th edition of the Congress of the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology \(ESHRE\)](#), held online this week.

This work has taken the participation of over 1,700 people from 10 different countries and allows seeing the evolution of the data making a comparison with the previous study that Institut Marquès carried out in 2014. Thus, Italy, Germany and Ireland are currently the most intolerant countries in Europe on this subject, while Great Britain is one of the most open.

According to **Dr Marisa López-Teijón**, CEO of Institut Marquès and main author of the study, *"infertility is still taboo because male fertility is still associated to virility, because motherhood is still considered as a priority in the woman's social role and because not being able of having children is still seen as a shame more than as a medical condition"*.

Do you think that assisted reproduction treatments are still taboo in your country?



Most Europeans believe that infertility is a forbidden issue and the comparison between 2014 and 2019 reveals that prejudices have increased in most countries. The average is an increase of 11%: although more than 9 million children have been born thanks to assisted reproduction, these treatments remain a taboo subject. *"These results allow us to better define the psychological needs of infertile patients and see how the cultural context of their home country can affect them"*, explains Dr López-Teijón. *"Society's attitude towards infertility can condition the way in which the treatment is experienced. In clinical practice it is helpful to know how to help the patient stay emotionally positive at all times"*, points out the renowned gynaecologist, who was chosen as physician of the year in Assisted Reproduction in 2019.

Differences between countries according to their legislation, culture and religion

The data are in opposition with the increase in success rates of Assisted Reproduction treatments and their greater information and dissemination. The results of this study make it clear that the social consideration of infertility is linked to the cultural and religious tradition of each country, as well as to its legislative framework. In countries with more restrictive laws such as Italy or Germany, couples that need an Assisted Reproduction treatment live it with greater secrecy. In Spain or Britain, where these techniques are permitted by law and covered by the health public system, there is instead greater social visibility.

They need to share it

Despite the differences between countries, all patients express a common need: to share their problem with their nearest environment. Although they perceive that the issue is still being rejected by society at large, increasingly, people who carry out an Assisted Reproduction treatment share it with their friends and family. 87% explained their situation to their most trusted circle. This figure has increased by 12% compared to the previous survey.

Sharing infertility is something that helps the surveyed feel better, as long as it is in privacy. 55% are predisposed to tell about their case to the media or on social media but always maintaining anonymity. *"We advise our patients to tell they are undergoing a treatment, but it is for them to decide when and how. They may do so without giving details, asking only for support, discretion and respect; without judgements or comments"*, concludes Dr Marisa López-Teijón.

About Institut Marquès

Institut Marquès is a Barcelona based centre of international standing in Gynaecology, Obstetrics and Assisted Reproduction with branches in Barcelona, London, Ireland (Dublin and Clane), Italy (Rome and Milan) and Kuwait. The centre, one of the most awarded at an international level and with a wealth of experience in particularly difficult cases, helps people in more than 50 countries achieve their dream of parenthood. Institut Marquès offers the highest pregnancy success rates, with 91% per cycle in IVF with egg donation.

Leader in innovation, it conducts an important line of research on the benefits of music in the early stages of life, foetal stimulation and the male role in assisted reproduction treatments.

Institut Marquès is also involved in the research of the relationship between toxics and fertility, taking part in many initiatives that support the defence of the environment. In 2018 it started its Corporate Social Responsibility project, "The Forest of Embryos". For every child born with the help of assisted reproduction treatments, a tree is planted. Institut Marquès also supports the manifesto "Citizens for Science in Pesticide Regulation", a coalition of civil society, institutions, scientists and legal experts that demands a reform on the use of pesticides in the European Union.

Links of interest:

<https://institutomarques.com/en/scientific-area/eshre-2020/>

<https://www.fertility-experiences.com/>

For further press information and interviews:

Mireia Folguera: mireia.folguera@institutomarques.com

Tel.: 0034-649 901 494