Single or double embryo transfer? Decision-making process in patients participating in an oocyte donation programme

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Introduction: In IVF/ICSI programs, it has been demonstrated that, after counselling about success rates and risks, a significant number of patients opt for single embryo transfer (SET) instead of double embryo transfer (DET). Up to date, no comparable studies have been published in oocyte recipients.

Objective: The aim of this study is to evaluate if counselling provided to oocyte recipients influences their preference about the number of embryos to be transferred and to identify relevant factors for this preference.

Study design, participants and methods:

1. Patient referred to oocyte donation
2. Questionnaire I completion
3. Counselling (oral and written information)
4. Donor – recipient matching (phenotypic and immunological)
5. Questionnaire II completion
6. Statistical analysis

✓ Preference about the number of embryos to be transferred
✓ Factor’s relevance in the preference

- Partner’s opinion (I)
- Age (II)
- Previous ART (III)
- Time urgency (IV)
- Desire for singleton (V)
- Desire for twins (VI)
- Desire for healthy pregnancy (VII)
- Probability of pregnancy (VIII)
- Mother’s risk (IX)
- Child’s risk (X)
- Cost (XI)
- Medical recommendation (XII)

38 pairs of questionnaires collected

✓ McNemar’s test for preference changes
✓ Comparison of mean scores pre and post-counselling

Results:

Figure 1. Factor’s relevance in the initial preference (Questionnaire I)

Figure 2. Preference about the number of embryos to be transferred

- Pre-counselling
- Post-counselling

Pre-counselling
SET 47,4
DET 28,9
Undecided 21,1

Post-counselling
DET (n=20) 50%
SET 40%*
Undecided 10%

*p<0.05. McNemar’s test

Figure 3. Influencing factors in recipients who changed from DET to SET

Conclusions and wider implications: After counselling, a significant number of recipients changed their preference from DET to SET. In these recipients, the relevance attributed to mother’s risks increased while the previous ART, the probability of pregnancy and the time urgency became less important. This study provides valuable information to improve counselling strategy in oocyte recipients, in order to help them make a more reasoned decision.