

ABC 7 Medical: Pregnancy Success Over 35?

Tuesday May 18, 2004 5:25pm

WJLA-TV Script

Anchor:

ONCE A WOMAN REACHES THE AGE OF 35, INFERTILITY PROBLEMS CAN BECOME MORE COMMON.

FOR YEARS WOMEN HAVE TURNED TO INVITRO-FERTILIZATION TO HELP THEM HAVE BABIES. NOW THERE'S EVEN NEWER SCIENTIFIC BREAKTHROUGHS TO HELP WOMEN.

MEDICAL REPORTER KATHY FOWLER HAS THIS STORY.

Fowler on set:

SOME WOMEN STILL AREN'T ABLE TO HAVE BABIES - EVEN WITH INVITRO-FERTILIZATION.

NOW THERE'S SOMETHING CALLED PRE-IMPLANTATION GENETIC DIAGNOSIS OR PGD. THAT'S MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR THOSE WOMEN TO HAVE CHILDREN, TOO.

Story:

WHEN KELLY AND ZUBAIR SHEIKH'S SON JOSHUA WAS FINALLY BORN, THEY WERE MORE THAN THRILLED.

Zubair Sheikh: "We call him our 'miracle baby'."

A MIRACLE BECAUSE THE SHEIKHS SPENT YEARS TRYING TO GET PREGNANT. UNABLE TO CONCEIVE, KELLY'S DOCTOR RECOMMENDED THE COUPLE TRY INVITRO FERTILIZATION USING PGD - OR PRE-IMPLANTATION GENETIC DIAGNOSIS.

Dr. Lawrence B. Werlin, reproductive endocrinologist: "When you utilize PGD, their chances of having a successful pregnancy are increased."

PGD HAS BEEN PRIMARILY USED TO LOOK FOR GENETIC DEFECTS LIKE CYSTIC FIBROSIS. BUT NOW, REPRODUCTIVE ENDOCRINOLOGISTS SAY IT CAN ALSO HELP PICK OUT THE HEALTHIEST EMBRYO FOR IN-VITRO FERTILIZATION.

Dr. Werlin: "PGD is looking at whether or not an embryo has too many or not enough chromosomes."

ACCORDING TO A NEW STUDY LED BY DR. WERLIN, TWO -THIRDS OF THE EMBRYOS IN MANY OLDER WOMEN DON'T HAVE THE 46 CHROMOSOMES NEEDED FOR A HEALTHY BABY. THE PGD PROCEDURE WHICH USES SPECIAL PROBES TO LOOK AT THE EMBRYO CELLS UNDER A MICROSCOPE, CAN IDENTIFY WHETHER THE EMBRYO IS ABNORMAL.

Dr. John Schnoor: "By testing the embryos when IVF is done, we can put back normal embryos back into the uterus."

AVOIDING IMPLANTING THE ABNORMAL EMBRYOS INCREASES A WOMAN'S CHANCE OF GETTING PREGNANT AND OF HAVING A HEALTHY BABY.

Kelly Sheikh, 39 years old: "That was the best best day of my life."

Fowler on set:

EXPERTS SAY PGD CAN ADD ABOUT 35-HUNDRED DOLLARS TO THE COST OF IN-VITRO FERTILIZATION AND THERE IS A SLIGHT RISK THE BIOPSY CAN DAMAGE THE EMBRYO.

THERE ARE MORE ON-GOING STUDIES ON PGD.