

Dear Dr Allan

Thank you for your time at the forum today, and for allowing me to email you a submission. Apologies I wasn't able to stay until the end of the session.

My husband and I went through multiple rounds of IVF, and have a 2 year old son as a result. Our concern regarding the process of IVF relates to unused embryos.

Our experience is that there is a push from clinics to create embryos potentially surplus to requirements, but inadequate information and support regarding what to do with these. We were strongly discouraged (basically not allowed) to freeze eggs and fertilise each cycle, even though we were prepared to accept a lower success rate and pay extra. We presumed this was because clinics publish success rates.

We did end up with surplus embryos, and at that time contacted the clinic requesting information on donating. We felt unsupported and uninformed by the clinic, to the point we decided not to donate. After listening to the stories today, I feel we made the wrong decision. With better support we may have been able to assist another couple create a family. We have many people in our support network in a similar situation - excess embryos, not comfortable donating them to science but unsure how to navigate donation.

The main concerns I have are:

Clinics technically fulfil the requirement for informed consent, but the way this is done is not meaningful or sufficient. More information needs to be provided at initial consultation.

The process for donating is ad hoc, clinic dependent or rests with the donors to access classified ads.

There is no official donor registry for embryo donation conceived children. I would ask you to consider that any changes made to donor registries includes embryo donations. These children also have a right to information.

Thank you for your consideration.

Warm regards,

Melanie van der Wilk

