



## Performing endometrial ‘scratching’ once during IVF treatment can increase clinical pregnancy by 20%

**Endometrial ‘scratching’ significantly improves the clinical pregnancy rate, including the number of babies born, when performed just once in women who are undergoing assisted reproductive treatment, such as IVF.**

Results from a clinical trial, to be presented today (Sunday) at the ISUOG World Congress in Sydney demonstrate a significant benefit to the timing of endometrial scratching, reporting an increase in the clinical pregnancy rate of women undergoing IVF and ICSI treatment to 49%, compared with the current average (29%), as well as an increase in the number of live births, reported at 42%, compared with the current average (23%).

Endometrial scratching, or injury, is defined as medically administered damage to the inner lining of the womb and was first demonstrated as a beneficial procedure in reproductive medicine in 2003.

However ‘scratching’ is an intrusive procedure and many people are still unsure as to how it works or indeed if it definitely does work. Furthermore, optimal timings and protocol for this intervention are yet to be clearly defined.

Up to 15% of women of reproductive age have problems conceiving and reproductive treatment failure is a cause of psychological distress for many couples.

Current attempts to improve reproductive treatments carry significant risks or are not financially viable. This clinical trial strived to determine the optimal timing of this promising intervention, simplifying protocols and minimising the impact to the patient.

158 women were recruited onto the trial, all of whom had previously received unsuccessful courses of reproductive treatment and, critically, were taking an oral contraceptive pill directly before the trial treatment commenced.

77 of these women were randomised to and received the ‘scratching’ intervention, which was administered 7-14 days before core reproductive treatment began, as part of standard pre-treatment gynecological screening.

39 of the 77 women achieved clinical pregnancy and 33 cases resulted in live births, compared with 23 live births in the control group.

The results of the clinical trial, which were published early online in the leading journal *Ultrasound in Obstetrics & Gynecology* on 2 September 2013 also demonstrated that endometrial scratching had no effect on miscarriage or multiple pregnancy rates compared with standard protocols.

Study co-author Dr Nick Raine-Fenning, University of Nottingham, UK, comments, “This is the first well designed trial conducted into endometrial scratching and the results are promising. Other trials have provided anecdotal evidence, but these have been limited and many questioned the validity of the technique. We are now carrying out a follow up study in Nottingham to provide further guidance into the use of endometrial scratching and early results are encouraging.”

Despite the wide spread use of the technique, the mechanism behind the success of endometrial scratching remains unknown. Dr Raine-Fenning’s Plenary talk on the opening day (Sunday) of the ISUOG World Congress in Sydney will address this question.

Professor Basky Thilaganathan, Editor in Chief of *Ultrasound in Obstetrics & Gynecology*, adds: “The study was tested on a very small and specific cohort of patients. The challenge now is to translate this success across other forms of reproductive medicine to benefit more patients.”

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23rd World Congress on Ultrasound in Obstetrics and Gynecology

6–9 October 2013, Sydney, Australia

Incorporating the ASUM 43rd Annual Scientific Meeting

**Sunday 6 October 2013**

**For more information, contact us at:**

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#### Notes to Editors

#### Relevant sessions at the ISUOG World Congress:

**Early pregnancy defines late pregnancy events:  
Endometrial injury: how a pre-pregnancy event impacts  
on the likelihood of a successful pregnancy**

(N. Raine-Fenning)

ISUOG Opening Plenaries

Sunday, October 6, 2013, 10:50 am- 11:10 am

Bayside Auditorium B, Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre.

#### Full article:

**Endometrial scratching performed in the non-transfer  
cycle and outcome of assisted reproduction: a  
randomized controlled trial**

CO Nastri, RA Ferriani, N Raine-Fenning and WP Martins

Volume 42, Issue 4, Date: October 2013, pages 375–382

#### About the ISUOG World Congress

The ISUOG World Congress is the leading event in women's imaging and a forum for the dissemination of the highest quality research and clinical information in the field of ultrasound in obstetrics and gynecology. The Congress brings together international expertise to promote clinical excellence and encourage research collaborations to improve health outcomes for women affected by pregnancy and gynecological complications, across the world. The 23rd annual ISUOG World Congress is taking place from 6-9 October, 2013 at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre incorporating the 43rd Annual Scientific Meeting of the Australasian Society of Ultrasound Medicine.

[www.isuog.org/WorldCongress/2013/Press](http://www.isuog.org/WorldCongress/2013/Press)

#### **\*\*PRESS CALL\*\***

Press are invited to the World Congress Plenary day on **Sunday 6 October** for an official press call with International experts from **13.45** in Bayside 105, Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, followed by a complimentary lunch. For full details and access to press releases, please contact Matilda Sims at [msims@isuog.org](mailto:msims@isuog.org) or on **+61 (0) 455 845 024**

#### About ISUOG

1400 women die from pregnancy related causes every day, worldwide. The International Society of Ultrasound in Obstetrics and Gynecology (ISUOG) is a membership organisation dedicated to ensuring access for health professionals to the highest quality education, training and research information so that ultimately, all women have access to competent ultrasound and that obstetric and gynecological conditions can be effectively diagnosed. ISUOG delivers high quality learning through its education program and disseminates research information and clinical guidance through its journal *Ultrasound in Obstetrics & Gynecology* and World Congress. With more than 7000 members across 126 countries, ISUOG is committed to improving health outcomes for women and their families across the world.