

Impact of High Technology on Reproductive Health

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The WHO's definition of reproductive health implies that people have the ability to reproduce. Women can carry on pregnancies with safe deliveries. Infants survive and grow up healthy. So people are able to regulate their fertility without risks to their health and they are safe in having sex. To improve reproductive health for this century, it needs to apply high technologies to assist people to have healthy sex life and be satisfied with their reproductive life; namely identifying contraceptives suitable and acceptable to both sex, improving outcomes of assisted reproductive technologies (ART), using genetic advances to identify factors leading to infertility. These high technologies have impacts on reproductive health. This paper will discuss mainly on ART.

Social Issues:

The technology is expensive. Only the rich or insurance covered can afford services. This causes inequity especially in the poor countries. Some people think, that amount of money could be wisely spent on other issue which has more impact on general population. ART advocates think it is justified, because childless couples suffer inner pain. Advance maternal age also causes concerns whether the offspring will have inferiority complex.

Ethical Issues:

Donor anonymity protects the privacy of donors and recipients, but the offspring is deprived of accessibility to genetic medical history and ancestral heritage. Most international ethical committees agree that gamete and pre-embryo donors should

not be reimbursed for their donation. Usually donors tend to be from lower socioeconomic level, so they receive compensation for their time and travelling. More importantly, to commercialize the process of services is unethical. Informed consent is another issue that occasionally has been left out. An emphasis on success rates overshadows failure rates. Facts are essential to the patient's decision.

Research Issues : New techniques are introduced into clinic use without informing the patients that they are still experimental. The demand for ova and embryos for research is expected to increase due to recent advances in stem cell research.

Economic Issues : Multiple births are major factor in the costs attributable to IVF. It is said that, providing insurance coverage of IVF may contribute to lowering multiple birth rates.

Law Issues : IVF allows a woman to become pregnant with a fetus genetically unrelated to her, either as the recipient of an ovum or embryo donation or as a surrogate mother. Both genetic and gestational mothers are biological mothers, but neither is always identified as the legal mother. It is still debatable whether an embryo is a person.

Religion Issues : Muslim world is against sperm donation and analogous to adultery which is similar to Catholic faith. Muslims have not accepted the opinion the Roman Catholic and Buddhism that human life begins at conception, but human life requires protection commences two or three weeks from conception and uterine implantation. The purposes of sex selection through preimplantations genetic diagnosis is unacceptable for Muslim.

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