

Social egg freezing: for better, not for worse

Heidi Mertes *, Guido Pennings

Bioethics Institute Ghent, Blandijnberg 2, 9000 Gent, Belgium

* Corresponding author. E-mail address: Heidi.Mertes@UGent.be (H Mertes).

Heidi Mertes is a postdoctoral research fellow of the Research Foundation, Flanders and member of the Bioethics Institute, Ghent. Her current research focuses on the ethical implications of new techniques for fertility preservation. Other research interests include the ethics of embryonic stem cell research and reproductive ethics.

Abstract

The possibility for healthy women to cryopreserve their oocytes in order to counter future infertility has gained momentum in recent years. However, women tend to cryopreserve oocytes at an age that is suboptimal from a clinical point of view – in their late thirties – when both oocyte quantity and quality have already considerably diminished and success rates for eventually establishing a pregnancy are thus limited. This also gives rise to ethical concerns, as the procedure is seen as giving false hope to (reproductively speaking) older women. This study evaluates which measures can be taken to turn social freezing into a procedure that is both clinically and ethically better than the current practice. The main objective of these measures is to convince those women who are most likely to (want to) reproduce at an above-average age to cryopreserve their oocytes at a time when this intervention is still likely to lead to a live birth and to discourage fertility clinics from specifically targeting women who have already surpassed the age at which good results can be expected.

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