



## Media Release

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Monday 21 November, 2011

### Assisted reproduction for HIV-positive people can be safe

People with HIV can safely conceive a child using assisted reproduction, says Dr Michelle Giles, an infectious diseases physician at the Royal Women's Hospital,

Retrospective analysis of Dr Giles' data published in the November issue of the *Medical Journal of Australia* reviewed the outcomes of 37 HIV-positive people with HIV-negative partners (known as 'serodiscordant' couples) who took part in an assisted reproduction program at the Royal Women's Hospital between 2003 and 2010.

In that time, nine babies were born and no cases of HIV transmission to the baby or the HIV-negative partner occurred.

Dr Giles said the study confirms the safety of assisted reproduction for serodiscordant couples within a program that includes strict protocols for HIV treatment and testing of all semen for detectable HIV before use.

Dr Giles said however, that for the partners of HIV-positive men, a slight risk remained.

"For HIV-positive men, there are few options for biological parenthood that carry no risk of HIV transmission to their HIV-negative partners," Dr Giles said.

However, recent international figures suggested the risk of HIV transmission occurring would be less than 1:6000 with assisted reproduction, compared with an estimated transmission risk of 1:1000 per single act of penile-vaginal intercourse in couples not on HIV treatment.

The clinical pregnancy rate per cycle in the study was 16.2 per cent for HIV-positive men with an HIV-negative partner and 15.4 per cent for HIV-positive women. In comparison, the clinical pregnancy rate for assisted reproductive technology treatment cycles in HIV-negative couples in Australia and New Zealand in 2008 was 22.6 per cent.

The Royal Women's Hospital began offering assisted reproductive techniques to HIV-positive men with HIV-negative female partners in 2003 and to HIV-positive women in 2006.

The choice of treatment offered includes intrauterine insemination or IVF/intracytoplasmic sperm injection, depending on the woman's age, reproductive history, fertility and her partner's sperm quality. Semen analysis is performed for all male clients and measures volume, sperm count, motility, velocity and morphology.

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