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Press Brief**3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of In vitro Fertilization Facility (IVF) (Test Tube Baby) at AIIMS**

Last three decades have seen significant advancements in the field of reproductive medicine and IVF is no doubt one of the most exciting discoveries of this century. To celebrate this discovery of mankind Prof Edwards have been bestowed with the Nobel Prize of Medicine last year.

In India approximately 6-8% couples are not able to have a child on their own and need some assistance to be able to conceive. The important causes of infertility in male are decreased sperm counts and motility, abnormal sperms, etc. In females, the important causes are blocked tubes, inability to ovulate or any abnormalities of the genital tract. Tuberculosis and genital tract infections are important contributors of tubal factor infertility.

However, there has been a great need for a facility for assisted reproductive technique especially for the poor. The IVF facilities in India mushroomed all over in India in the private sector, but are not within the reach of the common man due to its high cost. Besides a great need was also felt for research in this field to improve pregnancy rates and improve cost-effectiveness. With these objectives, a comprehensive IVF facility was inaugurated at AIIMS on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2008, to provide test tube baby facility, as well as conduct research in basic sciences, reproductive endocrinology and embryology with multidisciplinary collaboration with departments of Anatomy, Physiology, Pharmacology, Urology and Anaesthesia,

The facility created at AIIMS is an advanced IVF centre with the latest equipments and infrastructure. It is a part of the National services being provided by AIIMS and as 1<sup>st</sup> IVF research centre in India, which was dedicated to the nation by the then Hon'ble Health Minister Dr Anbumani Ramadoss in 2008.

This facility is manned by a team of highly trained doctors and staff under the leadership of Prof Suneeta Mittal, HOD, Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology & Director in-charge, WHO-CCR in Human Reproduction and Chief, ART Centre, AIIMS and since its inception has made a great progress, providing assisted reproduction facilities to the poor and needy. Over 1900 couples are already enrolled with the centre.

To celebrate the third anniversary, the IVF Facility has organized a Live workshop and International symposium. The live workshop being held on 5<sup>th</sup> will include demonstration of procedures like: Ovum Pick -up, Intracytoplasmic sperm Injection (ICSI), Assisted Hatching, Embryo Transfer and vitrification (cryopreservation) by a team of experts including Prof. Ariel Weissman, Prof Suneeta Mittal, Dr. Uma, Gordon, Dr Neena Malhotra and Dr Neeta Singh and Dr Ambrish Tiwari. These services are being routinely provided at AIIMS IVF centre. This will be followed by demonstration of Pre-Implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD) including Blastomere Biopsy and Single Cell PCR and FISH by Dr Shailja and Dr Kabra. Some couples who are carriers of genetic disorders and have a risk of transmission of disease to their offspring can hope to bring healthy children to life through the application of new technologies of pre-implantation genetic diagnosis. PGD availability in India is currently very limited and expensive; AIIMS IVF facility is in the process of adding this technology for the benefit of poor and needy. The centre has also invited 42 babies delivered at the centre during this period and will be felicitating them. There will also be a public forum on "Prevention, early diagnosis and Management of Infertility" on 5<sup>th</sup> afternoon. On 6<sup>th</sup> the centre is celebrating by organizing an International symposium on advances in infertility management with over 100 international and national experts participating.

The centre is also doing research on endometrial receptivity, low cost affordable IVF, several enzymatic factors influencing fertility and embryonic stem cells and had already published over 12 research papers.

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