

# Infertility Breakthrough Could Yield Higher Pregnancy Rates for IVF

LOS ANGELES, Calif. – July 28 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – A recent breakthrough in the field of In Vitro Fertilization (IVF), being offered in Southern California exclusively at the Sher Institute for Reproductive Medicine (SIRM-Los Angeles), may dramatically increase the odds of a woman getting pregnant through IVF, while at the same time reducing the likelihood of multiple births.

A new study co-authored by SIRM-Los Angeles physicians, Dr. Brian Acacio and Dr. Mory Nouriani, demonstrated that measuring a specific genetic marker produced by early human embryos could help predict the likelihood of a pregnancy.

The presence of this genetic marker above a specific threshold level was associated with a pregnancy rate of more than 70% in previously infertile women who underwent IVF for the study. In cases where the embryos showed a marker presence below the threshold level or an absence of the marker, the pregnancy rate was nearly three times lower – just 23%.

The study was published in the May 2005 issue of the medical journal *Fertility and Sterility* details the team's findings on the genetic marker, known as soluble Human Leukocyte Antigen-G (sHLA-G) (Volume 83, Issue 5, Pages 1410-1413: Soluble human leukocyte antigen G expression in phase I culture media at 46 hours after fertilization predicts pregnancy and implantation from day 3 embryo transfer).

This is the first method that enables a chemical evaluation of the “competency” of developing embryos. The test, referred to as the Embryo Marker Expression Test (EMET) is a non-invasive procedure that evaluates the level of the sHLA-G marker in the media surrounding individual embryos in culture, thereby leaving the embryo undisturbed.

“Current methods for selecting the best quality embryos for transfer to the uterus rely mainly on visual assessment of individual embryos by microscope,” said Dr. Brian Acacio, co-author of the study and Medical Director of SIRM-Los Angeles. “These types of evaluations are severely limited in their ability to provide strong indication of subsequent normal embryonic and fetal development.”

Because of the limitations of embryo assessment methods, there has been a tendency among many IVF practitioners to transfer more, rather than fewer embryos to the patient's uterus in the hope of improving the chances of pregnancy. This in turn has led to a high rate of high-order multiple pregnancies (triplets or more) with inherent long-term or even life-endangering risks to both mother and children.

“The explosion in the rate of higher order pregnancies as a result of IVF has created an enormous burden on the health care system,” explains Dr. Mory

Nouriani, co-author of the study and Associate Medical Director at SIRM-Los Angeles. "This is the primary reason why most insurance companies don't currently cover IVF."

"The advantage of this novel marker is twofold," says Dr. Nouriani. "First, it dramatically increases the chances of success with IVF in women who have embryos that are marker positive. Second, by allowing us to select the best embryos to transfer, we can reduce the total number of embryos transferred and thereby reduce the incidence of twin and triplet pregnancies."

For more information or to receive a copy of the study, please contact Dr. Brian Acacio or Dr. Mory Nouriani at 818-291-1985 or via email at losangeles@haveababy.com.

#### About SIRM

The Sher Institutes for Reproductive Medicine (SIRM) are separately owned IVF centers which operate under a shared set of practice standards and centralized management systems. Central to the SIRM philosophy is the concept of compassionate, personalized infertility care that addresses each patient's individual situation. SIRM physicians have been influential in the development of numerous breakthroughs in the field of reproductive care. SIRM founder, Dr. Geoffrey Sher, established the country's first private IVF practice in 1982.

SIRM offices are located in Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Sacramento, St. Louis, New York City, New Jersey and Central Illinois. Further information about the Sher Institutes for Reproductive Medicine can be found on the SIRM website at [www.haveababy.com](http://www.haveababy.com).

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