

COVERING EGG FREEZING COST FOR FEMALE EMPLOYEES AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE POLICIES

**A TOOL TO PROMOTE GENDER
EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE OR A
NEW FORM OF OPPRESSION?**

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Case summary

In 2014, Facebook and Apple announced that they will cover elective egg-freezing costs for their employees. The two companies may be the first to pay for the procedure for women who choose to delay childbearing. It is also part of the war of Perks, more benefits are offered to the employees by very competitive companies attract the top talent with the best benefits. The proposal aims also to support women to pursue a career without having to sacrifice being mothers or having a family life. The critical time in the career is also the period during which the biological and the social pressures to have a child are the strongest. Oocyte freezing allows female workers to postpone the decision to have child and take the time to go up job ladder and to reach the highest position in the firm. The cost of freezing egg is around 15 000 \$ + 5000 \$ for 5 years of storage. Apple offers to cover up to 20 000 \$ for these costs. This policy is part of a set of “family friendly policies” as Apple also provides extended maternity leave, adoption assistance and infertility treatments, and also paternity leave and work life balance measures to support parents. They have been many criticisms of this policy coming from different perspectives. This case study aims at analyzing the pros and cons and the efficiency of such proposal.

Keywords

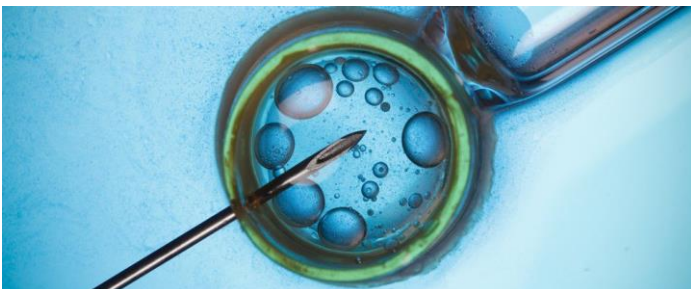
Gender equality; Reproduction/production; Work life balance policies; Glass ceiling;

There's a young woman working at Facebook who had got cancer, and I knew her and she came to me and said, 'I'm going to go through the treatment, and that means I won't be able to have children unless I can freeze my eggs, and I can't afford it, but our medical care doesn't cover it'. I talked about it with our head of HR, and said, 'God we should cover this.' And then we looked at each other and said: 'Why would we only cover this for women with cancer, why wouldn't we cover this more broadly?'

Sheryl Sandberg, CEO of Facebook, TIME, April 24, 2015¹

Imagine a world in which life isn't dictated by a biological clock. If a 25-year-old banks her eggs and, at 35, is up for a huge promotion, she can go for it wholeheartedly without worrying about missing out on having a baby.

Emma Rosenblum, Business Week, April 18, 2014².



¹['Sheryl Sandberg Explains Why Facebook Covers Egg-Freezing'](#), TIME, April 24, 2015.

² ["Later, Baby: Will Freezing Your Eggs Free Your Career? Egg freezing technology is helping women kiss the mommy track goodbye"](#), [Emma Rosenblum](#), BusinessWeek, April 18, 2014.

Why do High-Tech companies care?

Attracting the most talented workers

Most companies do not cover any infertility treatments for their employees. The proposal by Facebook and Apple is innovative in this sense. The two companies may be the first to pay for the procedure for women who choose to delay childbearing. It is also part of the war of Perks, more benefits are offered to the employees by very competitive companies attract the top talent with the best benefits. Then again, rich Silicon Valley companies are notorious for high-end benefits that can include gourmet food, dry cleaning and massages. At Facebook, the benefits include fertility treatment, surrogate mothers for homosexual couples and sperm bank access. This is all on top of three free meals a day at the office, a medical care in situ and a car wash³. In addition to these benefits for women, Facebook provides employees \$4,000 in "baby cash" and Apple also subsidizes up to \$15,000 in fertility treatments⁴. The addition of Egg freezing to the benefits plan comes as tech companies face mounting pressure to hire more women.

Some women high-educated may find these perks attractive. The benefit also is available to employees' spouses⁵. It can be used as a tool to articulate their career plan and their desire for motherhood: "As women grow older, the chances that their eggs contain chromosomal abnormalities goes up, but egg freezing allows women to preserve the fertility they had when they were younger" said Dr. Tomer Singer, a reproductive endocrinologist at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City⁶.

Silicon Valley companies have been experimenting with an array of benefits for women with good reason—they need to attract and retain female talent. Out of Apple's 98,000 global employees, [70% are male](#). That figure increases at leadership positions which are 72% male, and technical positions which are 80%. The figures are similar over at Facebook where men make up [69% of global employees](#), increasing to 77% when it comes to their management and tech workers are 85%⁷.

Work Life Balance policies

"By offering to pay for women to freeze their eggs, I think Silicon Valley is responding to what some of the young, talented women in their workforce want" Cali Williams Yost, who consult with companies about work/life balance. Enabling female employees to delay having children is insufficient: At some point, those workers will have children and also will need the right benefits then. "They are going to need the direct supports, the flexibility, the caregiving," she says, "leaves and benefits that actually help them combine work and life. Egg freezing is a great small piece of a much bigger puzzle."⁸

Technology companies in Silicon Valley have been rushing to extend parental leave allowances and other benefits to help recruit and retain employees. This policy is part of a set of "family friendly policies" as Apple also provides extended maternity leave, adoption assistance and infertility treatments, and also paternity leave and work life balance measures to support parents. "We need to rethink our public and corporate

³ [Female Tech CEO: Egg-Freezing 'Benefit' Sends The Wrong Message To Women](#), Sabrian Parson, October 20, 2014, Business Insider.

⁴ ['Pregnant Pause: We Should Applaud Facebook and Apple For Paying Women To Freeze Their Eggs'](#), Anushay Hossain Forbes, October 15, 2014.

⁵ [Silicon Valley Companies Add New Benefit For Women: Egg-Freezing'](#), All tech Considered, Tech, Culture and Connection, October 17, 2014.

⁶ [Future of Fertility Treatment: 7 Ways Baby-Making Could Change](#), Rachael Rettner, June 27, 2014, LIVESCIENCE.

⁷ ['Pregnant Pause: We Should Applaud Facebook and Apple For Paying Women To Freeze Their Eggs'](#), Anushay Hossain Forbes, October 15, 2014.

⁸ [Silicon Valley Companies Add New Benefit For Women: Egg-Freezing'](#), All tech Considered, Tech, Culture and Connection, October 17, 2014.

workforce policies and broaden our understanding of what a family is and looks like. We need to build a world where families are embraced and supported and loved no matter how they fit together” Sheryl Sandberg⁹.

Starting in January 2016, four months of paid time off will be provided to all new parents regardless of gender or location. Facebook currently offers only U.S.-based workers up to four months of paid leave. “We want to be there for our people at all stages of life, and in particular we strive to be a leading place to work for families,” she added. “An important part of this is offering paid parental or ‘baby’ leave.” Employees may take leave at any point up to a year after the birth of their child. Lori Matloff Goler, the company’s head of human resources, said the new policy will primarily help new fathers and employees in same-sex relationships outside the United States, noting that it will not change maternity leave already available to employees worldwide¹⁰.

“We continue to expand our benefits for women, with a new extended maternity leave policy, along with cryopreservation and egg storage as part of our extensive support for infertility treatments,” a spokesperson for Apple stated. “We also offer an Adoption Assistance program, where Apple reimburses eligible expenses associated with the legal adoption of a child. We want to empower women at Apple to do the best work of their lives as they care for loved ones and raise their families.”

What signal sent to female workers?

Marcy Darnovsky, executive director at the Center for Genetics and Society, says that expanding benefits to cover egg freezing could put pressure on women to delay childbearing so that their employer can get more hours out of them. Darnovsky is an advocate for the responsible use of reproductive technologies. *“When you're in a situation of your employer offering you a choice,” she says, “you really have to be careful that you're distinguishing between something that's an expanded option and something that's actually subtle or even explicit pressure to do what your employer wants you to do”¹¹*

Anne Phillips, professor of political and gender theory at the LSE, sees the turn to egg freezing as a worrying solution, *“a very troubling individualization of a problem which is to do with employment patterns”*. Instead of fobbing women off with wobbly perks, she says, employers need to reorganize work so that people – men and women – needn’t have to choose between a career and a family. *“Egg freezing is an individual solution to what we ought to recognize as a social problem.”¹²*

“There's a danger that with this sort of policy companies give a signal - or even promote the idea - that a woman needs to postpone having children in order to succeed in the workplace,” says Daisy Sands, head of policy at the Fawcett Society, a group that campaigns for equality for women. Geraldine Gallacher¹³ also feels that this sort of policy reinforces the message that it is a problem to be a mother. “It's a high-tech solution to a human problem. It's trying to change nature rather than the organization. And the same issues are going to apply when women do eventually have children.”¹⁴

Which costs are covered?

⁹ Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook, May 6, 2016

¹⁰ [“Facebook Announces Four Months Of Paid Parental Leave For All Employees”](#), The Huffington Post, November 27, 2015.

¹¹ [Silicon Valley Companies Add New Benefit For Women: Egg-Freezing, All tech Considered](#), Tech, Culture and Connection, October 17, 2014.

¹² [We need to talk about egg freezing](#), Eva Wiseman, The Observer, The Guardian, February 7, 2016.

¹³ Executive Coaching, that specialises in advising women who return to work after having a baby

¹⁴ [Should employers pay for women to freeze their eggs?](#), BBC, October 15, 2014.

Costs can be divided into 3 broad phases¹⁵:

- ✓ To undergo one egg freezing cycle (consultation, medication, egg retrieval, egg freezing) : around \$10 000
- ✓ Storage of eggs until use (usually an annual fee) : around \$500 per year
- ✓ Transfer of the eggs to attempt pregnancy (egg thaw, fertilization and embryo transfer procedure) : around \$ 5000

The cost goes upwards of \$30K for the three cycles recommend to find that “one good egg.” “*The total cost top out at an estimated \$45K—with no guarantee that a healthy baby will be born*”. Cost vary regarding the clinics¹⁶.

Apple and Facebook offer to cover up to 20 000 \$ for these costs.

Perks, Fringe Benefits and the Taxation Issue:

Covering the cost of freezing eggs for female employees are part of a set of fringe benefit provided by the employers. The value of fringe benefits is typically included in gross income by the IRS and subject to taxation (examples of taxable benefits include free flights, vacations, social club memberships and tickets to special events ...). Healthcare benefits, childcare assistance and tuition reimbursement are considered as nontaxable benefits. Consequently, payments or reimbursements of specific medical expenses are free from tax. But what about the money earmarked for a medical procedure like egg freezing should be excluded depending on the reason why these costs have been covered: *qualifying medical expenses are those that would qualify as federal income tax deductions under Section 213(d) of the Tax Code. That specifically includes expenses for “the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease, or for the purpose of affecting any structure or function of the body.” Elective egg freezing in the absence of a specific infertility diagnosis would not qualify as a deductible medical expense for this purpose.* Kelly Philipps Erb, 2014¹⁷.

Beside the financial cost covered, at least partially by the tech companies, other type of costs can be identified: psychological cost/ Probability of a future pregnancy/health costs for women, children ...

Why more women consider freezing their eggs?

A new technology labelled by the ASMR

Frozen sperm and embryos have routinely been used in reproductive medicine since the 1950s and '60s. But egg freezing has only been used since 1986 because it is more technically complicated. Human eggs contain a lot of water, and the freezing process caused ice crystals that damaged the structure of the cell and disrupt the chromosomes inside it. As a result, eggs were often not viable after they thawed. Mainly used by women who needed chemotherapy for cancer or other conditions and who were facing slim chances of having healthy eggs after their procedures, with relatively low odds of success. Until recently, egg freezing has been relatively rare as few practices have the experience or capability to offer this service.

But a new technique, called vitrification, has come around in the end of the 2000's: it consists in freezing the eggs so quickly that the damaging crystals don't form. To prevent the crystallisation, the egg must be dehydrated prior to freezing. This is done using cryoprotectants, which replace most of the water within the cell and inhibit the formation of ice crystals. These improvements have considerably increase the chances of

¹⁵ https://www.asrm.org/FACTSHEET_Can_I_freeze_my_eggs_to_use_later_if_Im_not_sick/

¹⁶ <https://www.eggbanxx.com/clinics/search/33220>

¹⁷ '[Apple Seeds Perk Wars, Adds Egg Freezing As Employee Benefit](#)', FORBES MAGAZINE, October 17, 2014.

success. In 2012, the American Society for Medical Reproduction (ASMR) said egg freezing should no longer be considered experimental because eggs frozen with vitrification are similar to fresh eggs in terms of their ability to lead to pregnancy, at least in cases where eggs are frozen from women at a young age. The ASMR lifted the experimental label from the technology for women with a medical need, citing success rates in live births, among other findings.

From medical to social motives

With these recent improvements in Egg freezing technology, more and more women opt to have the procedure as a way to ease the stress of a ticking biological clock. It is increasingly used by women who want to delay motherhood for non-medical reasons, for social reason (not having found the right partner, or focus on work...). According to USC Fertility¹⁸, *“Age negatively impacts a woman’s egg supply, with the quality and quantity rapidly deteriorating after age 35. With egg freezing, a woman can serve as her own egg donor when she is ready to conceive later in life.”*

“Anything that gives women more control over the timing of fertility is going to be helpful to professional women,” Shelley Correll, a sociology professor and director of the Clayman Institute for Gender Research at Stanford University.

According to Eva Wiseman, The Observer: “It’s expensive, frustrating and can be traumatic. As more and more women make the choice to freeze their eggs, do they know exactly what they’re getting into?”¹⁹

The reasons why women considering to freeze their eggs are not only medical reasons but also social reasons. Listed by the USC Fertility, main reasons are the following:

- *Women who want or need to delay childbearing in order to pursue educational, career or other personal goals.*
- *Women diagnosed with cancer.*
- *Women with objections to storing frozen embryos for religious and/or moral reasons.”*

Reasons listed by the [Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority](#) in the UK:

“You may want to discuss freezing your eggs with your clinic if:

- *you have a condition, or are facing medical treatment for a condition, that may affect your fertility (for example if you are undergoing chemotherapy for cancer)*
- *you are concerned about your fertility declining as you get older and are not currently in a position to have a child*
- *you are at risk of injury or death (eg, you’re a member of the Armed Forces who is being deployed to a war zone)*
- *you are about to undergo a sex change operation. “*

“In the future, it’s a real possibility that for women in their early 20s, egg freezing will be a normal thing to do”, said Dr. Bala Bhagavath, of the Strong Fertility Center at the University of Rochester Medical Center in New York²⁰.

“Using a feminist analysis of the notion of ‘choice’, I show that the differences between disease and age-related egg freezing continue to bear little moral relevance. I argue that if egg freezing is permitted to guard

¹⁸ <http://uscfertility.org/egg-freezing-faqs/>

¹⁹ [We need to talk about egg freezing](#), Eva Wiseman, The Observer, The Guardian, February 7, 2016.

²⁰ [Future of Fertility Treatment: 7 Ways Baby-Making Could Change](#), Rachael Rettner, June 27, 2014, LIVESCIENCE

against disease related infertility, then it ought to also be permitted to guard against age-related infertility, (at least) within a patriarchal society.” Petropanagos, 2010.

Making egg freezing options available can help women alleviate the emotional stress of finding the perfect partner to build a family.

Women’s control over their own body

Egg freezing is promoted as being as liberating as the Pill. EggBanxx²¹ website underlines: “Egg Freezing is a process in which a woman's eggs (oocytes) are prepared, extracted, frozen and stored for future use. By preserving her eggs, a woman provides herself with options if she finds herself struggling to conceive at the time when she's ready.” [EggBanxx](#) hosts “Let’s Chill” egg freezing cocktail parties, several sponsored by the drug company EMD Serono, Freedom Fertility Pharmacy, and three New York City-based ASRM member clinics: September 2014 event at a posh Manhattan hotel highlighted the “*Three F’s: Fun, Fertility and Freeze*.” Egg freezing is presented as an “insurance plan for motherhood.” “You put down \$15,000 or \$30,000 dollars and you *might* be able to preserve your fertility,” says Karen Maschke, a political scientist and research scholar at the Hastings Center, “but there are no guarantees.”

“The problem with all the controversy about what message Facebook and Apple are sending with their egg freezing gambit is that it does not take into account what the real message of feminism is. Feminism is all about giving more choice to women, whether it be to work or have a family or have an abortion or a host of other choices that have created controversy in recent years. For those women who may have wanted to freeze their eggs but could not afford to, this is a perfect solution and feminists should be celebrating that.”²²

The process and medical evaluation

Treatment and retrieval process

The egg retrieval process for oocyte cryopreservation is the same as that for in vitro fertilization. According to the USC Fertility²³, it takes approximately 4-6 weeks to complete the egg freezing cycle:

- ✓ 2-4 weeks of self-administered hormone injections and birth control pills to temporarily turn off natural hormones (this step can be skipped if there is urgency, such as prior to cancer therapy).
- ✓ 10-14 days of hormone injections to stimulate the ovaries and ripen multiple eggs.

“Once the eggs have adequately matured, they are removed with a needle placed through the vagina under ultrasound guidance. This procedure is done under intravenous sedation and is not painful. The eggs are then immediately frozen.

Few information about risks specifically associated with Egg-freezing process are available: “no mandatory national U.S. registry tracking the health of patients or consumers undergoing these procedures, it is impossible to know exactly how many women actually experience problems. One voluntary data-collection effort is the [Infertility Family Research Registry](#), housed at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. Unfortunately, fewer than 100 of the 500 infertility clinics in the country actively encourage patients or consumers to join and share

²¹ “EggBanxx is the first national network of fertility experts specialized in egg freezing. Created by women, for women, EggBanxx plans provide premium access to the best in care, support, financing and exclusive pricing.”

²² [Facebook, Apple Egg Freezing Not a Controversy, Liberty Voice, Lydia Bradbury, October 16, 2014.](#)

²³ <http://uscfertility.org/egg-freezing-faqs/>

their health experiences, or those of their offspring". The safety concerns reported for IFV can be relevant for Freezing egg procedure. There listed by the ASMR²⁴ (potential pelvic and abdominal pain, injury to the bladder, bowels or blood vessels, pelvic infection, and damage to the ovaries that are punctured during retrieval). Depending on the woman and the drug dosages, mild OHSS can manifest as bloating and abdominal pain that goes away on its own, but sometimes symptoms are more serious.

Storage and fertilization

During the freezing process, the egg can be modified preventing fertilization. Thus, currently, when eggs are thawed, a special fertilization procedure is performed by an embryologist whereby sperm is injected directly into the egg with a needle rather than allowing sperm to penetrate naturally by placing it around the egg in a dish. This injection technique is also used in IVF²⁵.

"When the patient is ready to attempt pregnancy (this can be several years later) the eggs are thawed, injected with a single sperm to achieve fertilization, and transferred to the uterus as embryos."

"At USC Fertility, we freeze eggs in the same manner as embryos, utilizing a freezing temperature of -196 degrees Celsius. Based on scientific evidence, as well as our experience achieving pregnancies with frozen embryos – in one case the embryo was frozen 10 years – we are confident that long-term storage of frozen eggs does not result in any decrease in quality. Based on preliminary data from our study and that of others, egg thaw rates of 75% and fertilization rates of 75% are anticipated in women up to 38 years of age. Thus, if 10 eggs are frozen, 7 are expected to survive the thaw, and 5 to 6 are expected to fertilize and become embryos. Usually 3-4 embryos are transferred in women up to 38 years of age. We therefore recommend that 10 eggs be stored for each pregnancy attempt. Most women 38 years of age and under can expect to harvest 10- 20 eggs per cycle".

Interest could rise further as the technique is perfected and the cost comes down. Currently, the cost of egg collection can range from about \$5,000 to more than \$15,000, depending on where women have the procedure done and how many eggs they freeze. (That does not include the cost of required medications, which are thousands of dollars more.)

Chances of future pregnancy

In 2012, the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) said there is not enough data to recommend that women freeze their eggs for the sole purpose of delaying childbearing. Studies are lacking "to support the safety, efficacy, ethics, emotional risks and cost-effectiveness" of egg freezing for this purpose, the ASRM said. Still, the ASRM does recommend egg freezing for several other groups of people, including women who, for example, have cancer, and may lose their fertility during chemotherapy (The Huffington Post, 2016)

Pregnancy is still not a guarantee with egg freezing. Despite The ASMR lifted the experimental label from the technology for women with a medical need, citing success rates in live births, among other findings. However, the ASMR also warned against using it only to delay child-bearing.

"Many women who freeze their eggs say they think of the procedure as an "insurance policy" in case they aren't able to become pregnant at older ages. But freezing eggs does not guarantee pregnancy success.

²⁴ [The Patient Education Website of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine. In vitro fertilization \(IVF\): what are the risks?](#), Society for Assisted Reproduction Technology,

²⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oocyte_cryopreservation

Studies conducted in Europe on frozen eggs from donors under age 30 found that women's pregnancy rates ranged from 36 to 61 percent."

The chances of pregnancy depend, in part, on how old women are when they freeze their eggs, and the number of eggs they freeze. *"Many of the studies showing successful pregnancies with frozen eggs have only looked at women freezing their eggs in their 20s or early 30s Another concern among fertility experts is that those pregnancy rates won't be as high for women trying to freeze eggs in their late 30s or early 40s."*, ARMS²⁶

An [online fertility calculator](#) developed by researchers at New York Medical College and the University of California, Davis estimates that a woman who freezes 15 eggs at age 30 has about a 30 percent chance of giving birth to a child if she uses these eggs. And a woman who freezes 25 eggs at age 30 has about a 40 percent chance of giving birth to a child, the calculator estimates." ²⁷

Studies tend to find that pregnancy rates for women who freeze their eggs after age 38 are significantly lower than for those who freeze their eggs at younger ages, according to ASRM. One study from Italy found that pregnancy rates for women who had their eggs frozen after age 38 was about 10 percent.

Egg freezing works best if it's done at younger ages. The [chances of pregnancy](#) are greater if a woman uses "younger" eggs — meaning eggs she froze in her 20s or early 30s, rather than later on, Dr. Wendy Vitek, a fertility expert at the University of Rochester Medical Center, told Live Science in an interview in June 2014. According to the ASRM, even in younger women (i.e., <38-years-old), the chance that one frozen egg will yield a baby in the future is around 2-12%. As women get older and egg quality goes down, the pregnancy rate per frozen egg drops further.

Children, families and parenthood

How many children born from frozen eggs?

Fertility centers have reported that the percentage of women who freeze their eggs and then come back to use them is relatively low. In a [recent study](#), researchers at a fertility clinic in Santa Monica, California, found that, from 2007 to 2012, 232 women froze their eggs at the clinic to delay childbearing, but 95 percent of these women still had not used their eggs by 2015. In a survey of 49 of these women, 16 percent said they were able to have children by other means, 30 percent said they were still not ready to have children and 53 percent said they hadn't used the eggs yet because they were still single. "These data suggest that, while some women do not return because they have achieved childbirth by other means, for most, delays in conjugal relationship formation are a major contributing factor to both patients' initial motivations for pursuing elective oocyte cryopreservation and the low rates of cryopreserved oocyte utilization. Given the advanced age of respondents, the high levels of importance assigned to having a co-parent, and low rates of marriage among respondents, non-utilization of cryopreserved oocytes is likely to persist." ²⁸

Babies born from frozen eggs are still not that common. It's not clear exactly how many babies have been born from frozen eggs, but by some estimates, it's in the low thousands. The procedure was first used in 1986. According to the USC Fertility Center, part of the Keck School of Medicine at the University of

²⁶ [https://www.asrm.org/FACTSHEET Can I freeze my eggs to use later if Im not sick/](https://www.asrm.org/FACTSHEET_Can_I_freeze_my_eggs_to_use_later_if_Im_not_sick/)

²⁷ [Is Freezing Your Eggs Dangerous? A Primer](#), Newrepublic.com, November 2014.

²⁸ ["Why Do So Few Women Return to Utilize Cryopreserved Oocytes? Qualitative Insights Into Elective Oocyte Cryopreservation"](#), C. Myers, Z. Daily, J. Jain, Fertility and Sterility, Volume 103, Issue 2.

Southern California, about 5,000 babies have been born from frozen eggs worldwide.²⁹ *In Orange County, California, nearly 70 families and their healthy frozen egg babies came together in October for the first reunion of babies born from [frozen eggs](#). The reunion, hosted by David Diaz, M.D., medical director of West Coast Fertility Centers and Frozen Egg Bank Inc., celebrated the promise of hope in egg freezing technology.*³⁰

Reproduction and parenthood

“In this complex interaction, technical aspects intermingle with cultural issues and the anthropological, psychological, and social meaning of parenthood and kinship. In particular, the split between sexuality and reproduction and between biological and social parenthood, as well as the intervention of new and different actors in the matter (medical professionals, gamete donors, surrogate mothers, etc) enlighten the meaning of reproductive roles and demand the elaboration of new definitions for gender, sex, person, family, parenthood, and offspring”, Martinelli, Busatta, Galvagni and Piciocchi, 2015.

““Parenthood” has distinct senses: biological, social, legal, and moral. These categories present problems at the margins. While the idea of a biological parent seems self-evident, modern reproductive technology complicates it, as a child can have genetic parents (gamete providers, who supply the sperm or egg) and a third, gestational, parent.” Brake and Millum, 2016.

Women’s point of view

Personal experience

“You’re so lucky that you have the choice to extend your fertility,” remarks a 44 year-old woman who tried IVF the past several years but failed, and is now using an egg donor and surrogate to have a child. Confronted with such undeniable evidence of my status as a single and childless woman who is running out of time, tears flood out, unbidden and uncontrollable”....“I am lucky. Egg freezing, from my point of view at least, is a miracle. At a cost of approximately \$11,000 at the [Stanford Fertility and Reproductive Medicine Center](#) where I’ve chosen to have the procedure done, it is a financial sacrifice that I am willing to make (insurance doesn’t yet cover any of it).” MeiMei Fox ³¹.

“The option of women in their 20s and 30s freezing their eggs is thrown around too casually – I know too well that we are not properly prepared for what it entails”. “I wish I’d known about how painful the harvest can be. You might feel pain for the next week so deep it feels like your spine is growling. I wish I’d know that the risk of [ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome](#) (OHSS), for which I was admitted to hospital, isn’t as rare as we’re lead to believe. In terms of egg production, I knew that quantity didn’t mean quality and that producing 18 eggs (“fabulous,” said the embryologist down the phone) might mean only two were mature enough in the end to use.” Eleanor Morgan³².

²⁹ <http://uscfertility.org/egg-freezing/>

³⁰ [“First Frozen Egg Baby Reunion Held in Orange County, California”](#)

³¹ [The Life Out Loud: Freezing My Eggs \(Part 1 of 5\), MeiMei Fox, The Huffington Post, August 25, 2011](#)

³² [“I had my eggs frozen. I wish someone had told me how difficult it was”](#), Eleanor Morgan, The Guardian,

"I didn't intentionally delay having children nor plan to get a divorce. My life and my fertility veered off course. Freezing my eggs bought me time and the possibility to have a child in the future. It's not a sure thing, but a gamble I am willing to take."—Brigitte Adams, 39, marketing executive ³³.

Enlightened Choices and information

Brigitte Adams started [a community forum called Eggsurance](#), where women can share information about the procedure. Adams paid for the procedure herself. "I froze my eggs at 39," she says, "and there was nothing out there that was specific to egg-freezing."

A bulk of blogs, websites have been created to increase the knowledge, testimony, experience sharing regarding egg freezing process, and fertility issues.

Ever considered freezing your eggs, either because you wanted to postpone kids for your career or because the right partner seems to be in hiding? One of my best friends, "Auntie M.," just went through the procedure, and I asked her to blog about it for Corporette : "I recently completed the process of freezing my eggs. The process was surprising in many ways, and although I was sure I wanted to do it, I could have used a primer, or even some advice from a friend who had gone through it (none of mine had). Here's my story » (December 19, 2011).³⁴

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