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IVF global histories, USA: Between a rock and a marketplace

Charis Thompson

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Short title: IVF Histories USA

IVF global histories, USA: between a rock and a marketplace

Charis Thompson

620 Barrows Hall, MC1070, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720, USA

E-mail address: charis@berkeley.edu (C Thompson).

Abstract

The USA has played, and continues to play, a distinctive and significant part in the history of IVF and assisted reproductive technology worldwide. American IVF emerged in the scientific context of contraceptive and fertility research, in the social context of a wealthy nation without universal healthcare, and in the political context of the abortion debate and its impact on federal versus state funding and regulation. IVF had its first clinical success in the USA in 1981. Since then, IVF in the USA has become known for procedures involving third, fourth and fifth parties as gamete donors and surrogates. The USA has also been one of the pioneers in domestic and transnational deployment of IVF for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) parenthood, and a pioneer of the social egg-freezing revolution. US IVF has been marked by professional and patient advocacy for such things as the honest reporting of success rates, recognition of the risks of postponed childbearing, and the need for insurance coverage. Certain landmark legal custody disputes over IVF embryos and offspring, as well as media attention to gendered, racialized, and class-based access to and pricing of assisted reproductive technology, have also driven the development of IVF in the USA.

Keywords: *abortion politics, custody, markets, regulation, USA*

The beginnings: biomedical research in reproductive biology

IVF in the USA began experimentally in the context of hormone and fertility research from the 1930s onwards. US scientists such as Gregory Pincus, clinicians John Rock and Miriam Menkin, and immigrants to the USA including Min Chue Chang, were pioneers with mammalian IVF – largely in the context of contraceptive research (Clarke, 1998). Pincus published the first reports of successful mammalian IVF in the mid-1930s (Pincus and Enzmann, 1936). Pincus was joined by MC Chang, who was recruited from Cambridge University in 1945 to join the newly formed Worcester Foundation of Experimental Biology in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts (Chang, 1959). Pincus and Chang, along with Rock and Menkin, would go on to become experts in mammalian IVF, paving the way for its eventual success in humans in the UK in 1978, and co-developing the oral contraceptive pill (Eig, 2014).

Although it has subsequently been questioned and may not, in fact, have been achieved until 1969 (Edwards et al., 1969), US researchers claimed, with the publication in 1944

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