

Navigating the Infertility Maze Abroad

According to the World Health Organization, there are close to 80 million infertile couples in the world and 800,000 in Spain alone. Delayed childbearing is the number one cause of infertility as more and more people put families on hold for their careers, until they find the right person, or until they are more financially stable. In fact, by the time a woman reaches the age of 30, over 90 per cent of the eggs in her body have been depleted. Other causes of infertility may be inherent genetic conditions and environmental factors. Recent research also suggests that obesity and smoking are among some of the key factors influencing infertility in Spain.

Over the years, many of these couples and individuals have started to explore alternative family building options such as IVF, surrogacy and egg freezing. With surrogacy being illegal in Spain, and with stringent laws applying to the egg donation process, couples have increasingly started to pursue these treatment options abroad. In the U.S., the term 'medical tourism' has gained popularity over the years, and it truly involves embarking on an unknown journey when exploring healthcare options in different countries. Knowing how to identify appropriate resources and engaging unbiased professionals can be risky and sometimes a bit overwhelming and scary.

The most important thing when pursuing alternative child bearing treatments abroad is to become educated. An infertility consultant can be especially useful in this respect by helping clients: 1) understand the differing healthcare systems; 2) know about the financial barriers and possible incentives; 3) find non-biased professionals; and 4) develop emotional tolerances for their given situation.

Differing Healthcare Systems

It is especially important to understand the differences that exist in healthcare systems. There are ways to work within the system to minimise financial risks when embarking on treatments abroad. For example, working with licensed insurance agents is the best way to analyse gaps in health care coverage for surrogates. Also, purchasing the appropriate policies for a particular situation is the ideal

Infertility and Private Medical Insurance in Spain

Medical coverage in Spain via the public health service is of good quality, but many people choose to take out private medical insurance in Spain for the best possible care. If you are one of the many people who spend part of the year in your home country and part of the year in Spain, then you would also probably want to consider taking out private health insurance for the time you spend in Spain. While many private health insurance companies in Spain cover some part of the family planning process, most of them do not

cover full fertility treatments. For some people experiencing fertility problems, the costs of investigation and infertility treatment in the UK may be beyond their budget.

Before embarking on any fertility treatment (in Spain, or other locations), ask your provider to break down exactly what procedures are included in your policy and how much of the treatment costs will be covered. This will enable you to effectively budget and/or compare options for exploring treatment abroad.

solution to mitigate excessive costs. Historically, the combination of this approach can help reduce significant investment.

Financial

Infertility treatment is expensive. It is imperative to plan and prepare for the end family goal and not just one cycle. For example, how many cycles of IVF are reasonable given a 10 per cent or 20 per cent chance of success before considering the next option which may include engaging an egg donor and increasing the chance of success to 60 per cent or greater?

Non-Biased Professionals

Pulling together an unbiased multi-disciplinary team of professionals regardless of location is another important aspect of accomplishing a treatment cycle abroad. Members of the team could include: a reproductive endocrinologist, embryologist, financial and estate planner, licensed insurance agent, recruiting agency, ideal surrogate, egg

donor, sperm donor, attorneys and a mental health professional.

A qualified Infertility Consultant should be able to organise this team with unbiased referrals specific to each individual situation. In addition, infertility consultants should be able to help identify qualified egg donor and surrogate candidates and anticipate concerns, state laws and new technologies.

Emotional

Pursuing alternative treatment options can be an emotional process. It's important to set parameters. For example, how many cycles of IVF can and will you endure before turning to a different treatment option that may yield a higher chance of success? Balancing hope with caution is essential in maintaining sanity and making non-emotional choices. It is also important to understand in advance what questions to ask specific to your given circumstances before entering the doctor's office. The answers you get are only as good as the questions you ask. ☺



Mindy Berkson, founder of Lotus Blossom Consulting, has more than a decade of experience in the infertility field. As one of the first infertility consultancies in the United States, Lotus Blossom Consulting, LLC was founded to arm consumers/patients with information and education to make the best medical choices. Mindy has guided hundreds of intended parents all around the world through the stressful demands of the infertility process by providing professional and compassionate assistance in dealing with the emotional, physical, and financial barriers involved with third-party reproduction abroad. For more information, www.lotusblossomconsulting.com/ www.theinfertilityconsultant.com.