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ESHRE News and Statements

14 March 2020

Coronavirus Covid-19: ESHRE statement on pregnancy and conception

In view of the increasing incidence of infection from the coronavirus Covid-19 and widespread initiatives to limit its spread, ESHRE reaffirms its recommendation that Society members follow local and national government advice, particularly national daily advice updates, with compliance encouraged where feasible.

Pregnancy and conception

There is no strong evidence of any negative effects of Covid-19 infection on pregnancies, especially those at early stages, as indicated by the latest updates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the USA and others in Europe.(1,2)

There are a few reported cases of women positive for Covid-19 who delivered healthy infants free of the disease.(3) There have been reports of adverse neonatal outcomes (premature rupture of membranes, preterm delivery) in infants born to mothers positive for Covid-19 during their pregnancy, but the reports were based on limited data.(4) Similarly, one case report has been published of an infected infant, but again there was no strong evidence that this was the result of vertical transmission.(5)

These data, although encouraging, only report small numbers and must be interpreted with caution. They refer to pregnancies in their final stages, but we have no information on the possible effect of Covid-19 infection on pregnancies in their initial stages.(6)

However, in view of the above considerations and the maternal and neonatal outcomes reported in cases of other coronavirus infections (such as SARS), ESHRE continues to recommend a precautionary approach.(7) It is also important to note that some of medical treatment given to severely infected patients may indicate the use of drugs which are contraindicated in pregnant women.

As a precautionary measure - and in line with the position of other scientific societies in reproductive medicine - we advise that all fertility patients considering or planning treatment, even if they do not meet the diagnostic criteria for Covid-19 infection, should avoid becoming pregnant at this time. For those patients already having treatment, we suggest considering deferred pregnancy with oocyte or embryo freezing for later embryo transfer.

ESHRE further advises that patients who are pregnant or those (men and women) planning or undergoing fertility treatment should avoid travel to known areas of infection and contact with potentially infected individuals.

ESHRE will continue to monitor the scientific literature, especially in relation to ART and pregnancy. And reaffirms the view that all medical professionals have a duty to avoid additional stress to a healthcare system that in many locations is already overloaded.

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2. <https://www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/guidelines/coronavirus-covid-19-infection-in-pregnancy-v2-20-03-13.pdf> (<https://www.rcog.org.uk/globalassets/documents/guidelines/coronavirus-covid-19-infection-in-pregnancy-v2-20-03-13.pdf>)
3. Chen H, Guo J, Wang C, et al. Clinical characteristics and intrauterine vertical transmission potential of COVID-19 infection in nine pregnant women: a retrospective review of medical records. *Lancet* 2020; doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30360-3 (<https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0140673620303603>)
4. Liu Y, Chen H, Tang K, Guo Y. Clinical manifestations and outcome of SARS-CoV-2 infection during pregnancy. *J Infection* 2020; doi. ([https://www.journalofinfection.com/article/S0163-4453\(20\)30109-2/fulltext](https://www.journalofinfection.com/article/S0163-4453(20)30109-2/fulltext))org/10.1016/j.jinf.2020.02.028 ([https://www.journalofinfection.com/article/S0163-4453\(20\)30109-2/fulltext](https://www.journalofinfection.com/article/S0163-4453(20)30109-2/fulltext))
5. Wang X, Zhou Z, Zhang J, et al. A case of 2019 Novel Coronavirus in a pregnant woman with preterm delivery. *Clinical Infectious Diseases* 2020; doi.org/10.1093/cid/ciaa200 ([https://www.journalofinfection.com/article/S0163-4453\(20\)30109-2/fulltext](https://www.journalofinfection.com/article/S0163-4453(20)30109-2/fulltext))
6. Liang H, Acharya G. Novel corona virus disease (COVID-19) in pregnancy: What clinical recommendations to follow? *AOGS* 2020; doi.org/10.1111/aogs.13836 (<https://obgyn.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/aogs.13836>)
7. Schwartz DA, Graham AL. Potential and maternal infant outcomes from coronavirus 2019-nCoV (SARS-CV2) infecting pregnant women: Lessons from SARS, MERS, and other coronavirus infection. *Viruses* 2020; doi.org/ (<https://www.mdpi.com/1999-4915/12/2/194>)10.3390/v12020194 (<https://www.mdpi.com/1999-4915/12/2/194>)

Further references

* <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019> (<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>)

* <https://www.iffs-reproduction.org/page/COVID-19> (<https://www.iffs-reproduction.org/page/COVID-19>)

* <https://www.acog.org/Clinical-Guidance-and-Publications/Practice-Advisories/Practice-Advisory-Novel-Coronavirus2019> (<https://www.acog.org/Clinical-Guidance-and-Publications/Practice-Advisories/Practice-Advisory-Novel-Coronavirus2019>)

* <https://www.asrm.org/news-and-publications/news-and-research/press-releases-and-bulletins/covid-19-suggestions-on-managing-patients-who-are-undergoing-infertility-therapy-or-desiring-pregnancy/> (<https://www.asrm.org/news-and-publications/news-and-research/press-releases-and-bulletins/covid-19-suggestions-on-managing-patients-who-are-undergoing-infertility-therapy-or-desiring-pregnancy/>)

12 March 2020

Lynn Fraser ESHRE chairman 1999-2001



It was with great sadness that ESHRE learned of the death of Lynn Fraser, chair of ESHRE from 1999 to 2001 and the first female to lead the Society. Lynn, a biologist with a research interest in sperm function, had an extensive involvement with ESHRE, moving from the Advisory Committee in 1990 to become two years later co-ordinator of the newly founded Special Interest Group Andrology. She joined the Executive Committee the following year and in 1999 became the Society's first female chair, taking charge of ESHRE during the two most difficult years of its history.

Lynn Fraser grew up and was educated in the USA. She took her first degree in zoology at the University of Colorado and her doctorate at Yale, where she was awarded a Ford Foundation postdoctoral fellowship. In 1972 she moved to London to take up a scientific post for the Medical Research Council, where she remained for five years. In 1977 she became a lecturer at King's College, London, and in 1993 Professor of Reproductive Biology. From 1991 Lynn was also an inspector for the UK's Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority.

The years of Lynn's chairmanship of ESHRE were noted for their divided views on the publication model of the ESHRE journals. Robert Edwards, who had edited *Human Reproduction* from its foundation in 1985 and in the meantime had introduced *Molecular Human Reproduction* and *Update*, favoured self-publication, while the Executive Committee preferred to rely on the proven support of a commercial publisher. It was Lynn's task to steer ESHRE's way through these divided opinions and to ensure through unanimity the continuing success of the journals.

After her academic retirement in 2003, Lynn retained her great interest in ESHRE and its progress, and was always to be seen at every annual meeting, enjoying the social gatherings and the company of her fellow past chairs. She had not been well for the past few months and ESHRE is honoured to express its gratitude for her work and its condolences to her husband Bill and family.

Hans Evers, who succeeded Lynn as ESHRE chairman in 2001, recalls how he learned 'to appreciate Lynn's wise governance and her gifts as a considerate moderator', adding: 'She always was at her best when strong opinions were in conflict, and when irreconcilable opponents needed an

honourable escape. Otherwise, we will always remember Lynn and Bill (the first man in our annual meeting's spouses programme) for their congeniality, their great social skills and their delightful and entertaining dinner talks.'

12 March 2020

CAMPUS meetings postponed

It is with great regret that ESHRE is postponing its Campus meetings scheduled for March and April. ESHRE has been closely monitoring the spread and prevention of the coronavirus Covid-19 and has taken this decision in the light of present circumstances.

The following Campus meetings, originally planned for March and April 2020, have now been postponed:

- 27-28 March 2020, Top quality in ultrasound - Bucharest, Romania, has been postponed to 25-26 September 2020
- 2-4 April 2020, Reproduction, hormones and the brain - Amsterdam, the Netherlands, has been postponed to 6-8 May 2021

The following Campus meetings have now been cancelled:

- 19-21 March 2020, Research: getting started - Leuven, Belgium
- 22-24 April 2020, Endoscopy in reproductive medicine - Leuven, Belgium

At this point decisions about our two Campus meetings scheduled for May (14-15 May, Counselling in third party reproduction - Amsterdam, and 21-23 May, 'Haute cuisine' of the IVF laboratory - Barcelona) have been deferred until mid-April at the latest.

'We have been monitoring the situation closely,' said ESHRE Chair Cristina Magli, 'but in the end, with increasing infection rates, travel restrictions and more international prevention measures in place, we considered postponement our best option given that avoiding personal contact is the only way to stop spread of the virus. We hope all ESHRE members and colleagues understand and support our decision.'

ESHRE will try to re-arrange these meetings at later dates with the SIG organisers and will inform all registrants individually about new arrangements. Meanwhile, answers to some of your questions may be found here (</en/Home/COVID19>).

12 March 2020

Coronavirus: ESHRE annual meeting still on schedule

ESHRE is closely monitoring developments in the spread and prevention of the novel coronavirus Covid-19 and wishes to reassure members and colleagues that its annual meeting, scheduled for Copenhagen on 5-8 July, is still on schedule to go ahead. We are monitoring infection updates and local travel and prevention requirements and at present have no plans to cancel or postpone the meeting. For frequent worldwide updates on the situation in Europe, we refer readers to the (official)

coronavirus website (<https://politi.dk/coronavirus-i-danmark/in-english/questions-and-answers>), the website of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) (<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/novel-coronavirus-china>) and the Q&As provided by the Danish Health Authority (<https://www.sst.dk/da/Viden/Smitsomme-sygdomme/Smitsomme-sygdomme-AA/Coronavirus/Spoergsmaal-og-svar/Questions-and-answers>)).

ESHRE will continue to monitor these developments and provide further updates as necessary.

FAQs COVID-19



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