

Sparing hope for the future: Preserving fertility in cancer patients

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While families around the world delay childbearing to later in life, cancer diagnoses are affecting people ever earlier in life. When these lifestyle trends collide, we see an increasing number of young women rendered infertile by cancer or cancer treatments.

What can be done about it? What do doctors need to know? And does a [cancer](#) diagnosis mean that a patient can never have children?

The newest Special Issue from *ecancermedicalscience* tackles these problems, collecting the latest research in fertility-sparing cancer treatments by teams of oncology experts from Europe, North America and Latin America.

Each group of researchers presents a paper on the latest fertility-sparing research in their own area of interest, from [breast cancer](#) to cervical and [ovarian cancer](#).

These treatments range from specialised surgical techniques to preparing and freezing eggs for future use - after the patient is in remission.

Fertility-sparing [cancer treatment](#) must strike a delicate balance, explains the Guest Editor of the Special Issue, Dr Ignacio Zapardiel of La Paz University Hospital, Spain. "Gynaecological oncologists must try to balance the fertility wishes of [patients](#) with oncological outcomes which are not always clear."

This Special Issue comes at a key time, Dr Zapardiel says. "Lifestyle has delayed the mean age for childbearing, so the number of patients suffering from a gynecologic malignancy without having their fertility desires fulfilled has also increased."

"The techniques developed for these patients may also benefit healthy women who simply want to wait for the perfect time to get pregnant," suggests author Dr Maria de Pedro of the HHM Nuevo Belén University Hospital, Spain.

Dr de Pedro contributed a research paper on fertility preservation techniques in patients with breast cancer.

"The policies of some large companies that finance the preservation of eggs for their employees may seem like funny anecdotes," says Dr de Pedro.

"But one way or another, fertility preservation is a reality for many people, and we have to adapt to live with it."

More information: *ecancermedicalscience*, ecancer.org/special-issues/7-fertility-sparing.php

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