

Single women freeze their eggs to avoid 'panic parenting,' study finds

October 31 2018



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Most single women who freeze their eggs for non-medical reasons are doing so to avoid 'panic parenting' (entering into unwise relationships to have a genetically-related child), a new study published in *Human*

Fertility finds.

The research also indicates that clinics need to be clearer about the likelihood of having a baby with these eggs in the future.

Dr. Kylie Baldwin and Professor Lorraine Culley, of the Centre for Reproduction Research at De Montfort University, interviewed 31 [women](#) who had frozen their eggs for 'social' reasons. The participants, 84 per cent of whom were single, were asked why they had chosen to do this, how they found the experience, and what information they were provided about the probability of eventually achieving a [live birth](#) with frozen eggs.

For the majority, the lack of a [partner](#) or having a partner unwilling to commit to fatherhood was the most common reason for egg freezing. Some described the process as something of an 'end in itself', providing them with more 'breathing time', and taking the pressure off the search for a suitable partner.

Many described how they hoped to never need to use their frozen eggs and instead expressed a desire to conceive naturally with a future partner. Several also reported that they found the process emotionally difficult as they fundamentally did not want to be freezing their eggs. Instead, they would have preferred to have been pursuing motherhood with a committed partner.

Worryingly, the information available to women considering freezing their eggs was found to be inadequate. Nearly all the women said that the clinics they approached were unable to provide an estimate of the likelihood of a future live birth with their frozen eggs. There was a lack of detailed discussion with doctors about post-freezing processes and outcomes, and the women, whose average age at the time of freezing was 37, were not given clinic- or age-specific information.

With rising numbers of women considering egg freezing, particularly in Europe, the study's authors call for more to be done to support women going through this process.

Dr. Baldwin said: "Whilst the number of women freezing their [eggs](#) remains small, many more are now considering this option as a way of extending the window of time they have to pursue genetic motherhood. Clinics providing this technology have a responsibility to support informed decision-making by providing women who enquire about egg freezing with detailed information about the likelihood of achieving a live birth specific to their age at freezing.

"Furthermore, women should be informed of the costs and risks, as well as the physical and emotional demands of egg freezing and any future IVF treatment.

"Clinics should also be aware of the specific emotional needs of women undergoing [egg freezing](#) who are more likely than IVF patients to be undertaking this uncertain and ambiguous process without the support of a partner."

More information: *Human Fertility*, www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14647273.2018.1522456

Provided by Taylor & Francis

Citation: Single women freeze their eggs to avoid 'panic parenting,' study finds (2018, October 31) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-10-women-eggs-panic-parenting.html>

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