Agencia: Reuters Número:2686 Hora:1946 Fecha:28/02

Women adopt frozen embryos, save them from science
    MADRID, Feb 28 (Reuters) - A Spanish clinic that allows women to adopt frozen embryos to save them from scientific research said on Monday 14 women were pregnant with adopted embryos.
    The Barcelona clinic launched a scheme last year to allow embryos left over from fertility treatment and destined for stem cell research to be implanted into women.
    Tens of thousands of embryos are currently frozen in Spain and the launch of the programme coincided with the government allowing scientists to use them for research.
    Scientists believe investigation on stem cells -- master cells with the potential to grow into any human cell or tissue -- could provide cures for diseases such as Alzheimer's.
    The Institut Marques said couples who had lost a child, infertile couples, and single and homosexual women were among those who had decided to have an embryo implanted.
    But there were also women who wanted to save the frozen embryo from being used in scientific research. Opponents of stem cell research including the Roman Catholic Church say it is unethical to destroy a human embryo.
    "There are also couples who already have children and for ethical reasons consider this a new kind of parenthood, to provide a solution for a leftover embryo and avoid its use in research," Dr. Olga Serra, head of the programme said in a note.
    Infertile couples can already receive embryos from other couples but they tend to ask for embryos with certain characteristics, such as race or hair colour.
    This scheme -- which the Barcelona clinic says is the first of its kind -- aims to find parents for the embryos, not babies to couples' specifications.
    The clinic said about a third of the people who had shown an interest in the embryo adoption programme were from outside Spain, with most coming from France, Italy and Portugal.

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