

Women who respond poorly to ovarian stimulation for IVF have disappointing success when converted to intrauterine insemination

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Introduction

Despite the use of meticulous ovarian stimulation and new monitoring protocols, at least 8-10% of IVF patients do not reach the minimal criteria for oocyte recovery and the cycle is abandoned. Some women, however, are suitable for conversion to intrauterine insemination (IUI)

This overview evaluated the hypothesis that conversion to an IUI cycle in selected abandoned IVF cases might salvage the treatment cycle

Materials and Methods

In a two years period (2000-2001) women who had a suboptimal response to stimulation on IVF but were suitable for IUI (i.e patent tubes and normal semen parameters in conjunction with one or two follicles > 14 mm) were advised to have IUI instead of cancelling the cycle

Materials and Methods

22 women (mean age 37 years range 30-45) chose this option (group A). Single IUI of the prepared semen was performed 36-40h after injection of 10.000 IU of HCG, and the luteal phase was supported by Cyclogest pessaries 400 mg twice daily for 15 days. In all cycles, the partner's sperm was used

Materials and Methods

Patients in group A were therefore compared with 40 stimulated IUI cycles with partner's sperm (group B). Outcome measurements were delivery rates in both groups. All the women were having before and after the ovarian stimulation smear test to check cytologically their hormone status and profile

Results

Only one woman (age 33) in group A delivered a healthy child compared with patients in group B (4.5% versus 15%)

Conclusions I

Our overview showed that women who are responding poorly to IVF stimulation have a very low chance of conceiving if the cycles is converted to IUI. This phenomenon probably reflects a reduced ovarian reserve and oocyte quality

Conclusions II

While it may be justified in these circumstances to convert the cycle to IUI, patient should be counselled about the low probability of success