

Japan's first fertilized eggs created via in vitro fertilization using donated eggs

The Oocyte Donation Network (OD-Net), a Kobe-based group created to help women who do not have their own eggs due to medical conditions, said on July 27 that it created fertilized eggs via in vitro fertilization with eggs collected from two volunteer donors and sperm from the husbands of women desiring donated eggs.

The procedure represented the first infertility treatments in the nation's history whereby eggs had been provided by third-party donors who were neither related nor known to those receiving them. The eggs are scheduled to be transferred into the recipients' wombs within the year.

"While different opinions exist with respect to the matter of in vitro fertilization that does not involve the sperm and egg of a married couple, there are numerous such couples who desire to undergo this procedure," said OD-Net Director Sachiko Kishimoto during a press conference held at the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. "I hope that legislation in this regard will be passed in a timely manner, which will also benefit volunteer donors who are providing their eggs free of charge."

The two volunteers whose eggs were used in the recent fertilizations were both anonymous women in their 30s who were unpaid in accordance with OD-Net's policy. Both already have children of their own.

The two recipients who will receive their fertilized eggs are also both women in their 30s who are married and who were diagnosed with early menopause that resulted in an absence of eggs.

The two infertility patients were matched with the donors by an organization known as the "Matching Committee" -- which is comprised of pediatricians and lawyers -- based upon such factors as age and blood type. Consultations were also undertaken with clinical psychologists, and the donations were approved by an ethics committee.

In order to avoid the identity of the donors and recipients being disclosed, details such as the regions where they live and the medical facilities that were utilized have remained undisclosed.

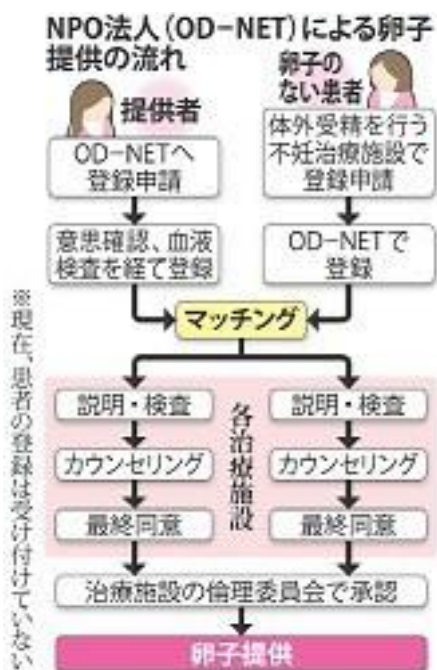
OD-Net began soliciting volunteer egg donors in January 2013, and announced in May of the same year that matches had been made between three donors and those desiring donated eggs. The procedures did not go forward, however, after the donors changed their minds.

July 27, 2015 (Mainichi Japan)

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20150727p2a00m0na036000c.html>

不妊治療：第三者卵子で受精卵 無償提供、国内初

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卵子提供の流れ

[拡大写真](#)

病気で卵子のない女性患者を支援するため、無償ボランティアからの卵子提供をあっせんする神戸市のNPO法人「卵子提供登録支援団体（OD-NET）」は27日、2人の30代のボランティア女性から採卵し、それぞれ提供を希望する患者の夫の精子と体外受精させて受精卵を作製したと発表した。年内にも患者の子宮に移植する。親族や知人以外の見ず知らずの第三者から卵子提供を募り、実施する不妊治療は国内初。

同団体の岸本佐智子理事長らが、厚生労働省で記者会見した。岸本理事長は「夫婦間以外の体外受精には賛否両論あるが、望む夫婦はたくさんいる。無償で卵子提供するボランティアのためにも早急な法整備を求めたい」と話した。

卵子提供者は、匿名や無償を条件に応募した子どもがいる女性2人。提供を受ける患者2人はともに30代の既婚者で、早期閉経で卵子がないと診断された。

小児科医や弁護士で構成される「マッチング委員会」で、患者の年齢や血液型などを参考に提供を希望する患者と提供者を組み合わせ、臨床心理士によるカウンセリングなどを経て、倫理委員会が提供を承認した。治療施設、居住地域などは「当事者の特定につながる」として公表しなかった。

同団体は2013年1月に提供者募集を開始。同年5月、ボランティア女性3人からの提供相手が決まったと発表した。提供者の意思撤回により提供には至らなかった。【阿部周一】

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■解説

◇法整備なく、課題多く

神戸市のNPO法人「卵子提供登録支援団体」（OD-NET）が取り組む第三者の無償ボランティアから卵子提供を募る事業で、初めてボランティア女性から卵子が提供され、匿名の第三者の提供卵子を用いた妊娠、出産が近付いた。病気で卵子のない患者の期待を集める一方、「法整備がないままの実施は問題」と指摘する専門家も多い。

国内での卵子提供は、1998年に諏訪マタニティークリニック（長野県）が妹からの提供を受けた女性の出産を発表して以降、一部の医療機関が姉妹や知人を提供者に実施してきた。

だが、国内の法整備は進まず、米国やタイ、台湾など海外へ渡航して有償で卵子提供を受ける女性も多い。

一方、卵子提供には課題も多い。遺伝的につながりのある卵子提供者が母か、産んだ女性が母かについて現在の民法には規定がない。自民党のプロジェクトチームが「産んだ女性を母」と親子関係を定める民法特例法案の今国会提案を目指すが、成立の見通しは立っていない。提供者に排卵誘発剤の副作用など健康リスクが起きる恐れもある。

また同団体の卵子提供では、生まれた子が15歳になり、希望すれば提供者の氏名などの情報が開示される「出自を知る権利」を認める。だが、親が子に治療についてどう伝えるか、子がどう受け止めるか、子が卵子提供者と会うことを希望した場合にどう対応するか—など長期にわたる課題が想定される。【阿部周一】

<http://mainichi.jp/shimen/news/20150727dde001040054000c.html>

Fertile eggs produced through donation from anonymous women

Kyodo

- Jul 27, 2015

Two women with ovarian problems have produced fertile eggs through in vitro fertilization using sperm from their husbands and eggs donated from anonymous females, a nonprofit organization supporting fertility treatment said Monday.

While there have been 24 cases in Japan in which women have given birth by using sperm from their husbands and eggs from their sisters or friends, it is the first time that complete strangers had donated the eggs.

The development could bring attention to a host of issues Japan needs to deal with over egg donation, including ensuring the rights of children to know about their origins and compensation for health problems that donors could face when offering eggs.

The fertile eggs will undergo screening for hepatitis and other diseases before being implanted in the two female patients — both in their 30s and suffering from premature menopause — possibly by the end of this year. The donors are also in their 30s and have children.

The children to be born will be notified before they enter elementary school that people other than their mothers have donated eggs, according to Kobe-based NPO OD-Net, or Oocyte Donation Network.

If the children wish to do so, they can also learn about the donors when they reach the age of 15.

The organization quoted one of the donors as saying she offered her eggs in the hope she can “help couples having a hard time in fertility treatment.”

One of the patients said in a statement: “I am overwhelmed with gratitude toward the donor. Now it is my turn to try hard.”

OD-Net in January 2013 started soliciting volunteers under age 35 to donate eggs on an anonymous basis to women who can’t produce eggs due to illnesses but are capable of giving birth.

Because two cases satisfied medical conditions, OD-Net said in April this year that an ethics panel of an institution consisting of fertility treatment clinics gave the green light to their treatment.

On in vitro fertilization involving people other than a couple, a health ministry panel said in a 2003 report that eggs should be donated only from an anonymous third person because receiving eggs from a close person could complicate family relationships.

But it has been nearly impossible for individuals to find an anonymous egg donor. With no laws or regulations on egg donations, patients’ sisters or friends have usually become donors.

Sachiko Kishimoto, the head of OD-Net, said: “There are mixed reactions to in vitro fertilization involving people other than a married couple, but I want people to know there are many couples wishing (to undergo the treatment).

“We want (the government) to swiftly prepare laws, thinking about people who are donating eggs without being paid and without compensation,” she said.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/07/27/national/science-health/fertile-eggs-produced-donation-anonymous-women/#.VbbTObckdpk>