

App lets you watch IVF embryo grow

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Fertility patients will be able to watch their babies grow on their mobile phones with an app that films the embryo before it is implanted.

The live stream helps patients to feel calmer about IVF, according to a clinic that uses the app. Couples can even “pick their own”, selecting the embryo that looks strongest to implant.

Embryos created by in-vitro fertilisation are stored in incubators for several days before being implanted. The app takes a camera feed from the incubator and transmits it to a smartphone.

Federica Moffa, a gynaecologist at Institut Marquès, the Spanish fertility clinic that developed the app, said: “It allows them to get much more involved in the IVF process and helps them to establish an emotional relationship with their future child.”

A study of 400 patients at the institute who used the app found that 91 per cent said it made them feel calmer, and 43 per cent checked in more than five times a day, according to data presented today at the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology conference in Geneva.

Half chose the embryo that they felt was developing best, and in 74 per cent of those cases doctors confirmed that it was indeed the most viable.

More Britons are going abroad for fertility treatment as the NHS cuts back. Only 12 per cent of local trusts now offer the three cycles of IVF recommended in NHS guidelines, according to a study by Fertility Network UK, down from 24 per cent in 2013. Spain is the most popular destination, followed by Greece and the Czech Republic.

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