

# IVF mothers and babies' 'urgent need' for health-check database

By Sarah Knapton  
SCIENCE EDITOR

BABIES born through IVF and their mothers may be suffering a raft of undetected health problems because they are not being monitored, a leading fertility doctor and MP have warned.

Prof Geeta Nargund, the founder and medical director of Create Fertility and MP Siobhain McDonagh, are calling for the Human Fertility and Embryology Act to be amended to merge NHS and fertility databases.

Currently, 62 per cent of IVF treatments occur in private clinics that do not need to share their data with the NHS.

And after treatment, neither mothers or babies are checked to make sure that they are not experiencing health problems even though overseas studies have



Louise Brown, the oldest test tube baby at 40 years old

linked IVF to colorectal cancer, borderline ovarian tumours and mental health problems.

Evidence has shown that 90 per cent of women undergoing IVF have experienced depression of some sort.

Recent research also suggests babies born through fertility treatment are at greater risk of prematurity,

low birth weight and still births, as well as heart disease, high blood pressure, and male fertility problems.

"With no UK data or any process for monitoring the health of IVF mothers and babies in the UK, we have no way of knowing the long-term effects of IVF," warned Prof Nargund.

"There is an urgent need for a centralised database which would enable the health implications for women undergoing IVF and babies born from IVF to be monitored in both the short and long term."

Around 20,000 babies are born through IVF in Britain each year. But the oldest test tube baby – Louise Brown – is only 40 years old, so the long-term impact of fertility treatment is still unknown.

The second reading of the amendment to the Act will be heard on Oct 26.

Sunday Telegraph 16<sup>th</sup> September 2018