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**Sunrise fact sheet**

**Hope for infertile couples**

Interview: Dr Orly Lacham-Kaplan, Monash University  
 Broadcast Date: June 22, 2005

There is new hope for couples struggling to have a baby.

A research team, including Australian scientists, has found a way to create human eggs from embryonic stem cells.

**The procedure explained**

Scientists took embryonic stem cells from mice and put them in a lab dish, covered with a solution with testicular cells, and they turned into eggs. Embryonic stem cells come from embryos and can turn into any type of cell in the body.

**What made this research unique?**

An overseas team produced eggs in this way in 2003 as a one-off, but the Melbourne researchers have come up with a process that does it repeatedly, something no other scientist anywhere in the world has done.

**Are these eggs normal?**

They look like eggs and have some genes but do not have a shell, so therefore they could be abnormal. Further research is required.

**What is the next step in the research?**

The scientists have to test the quality of the eggs to determine whether they could fertilise, grow properly and ensure they do not have deformities.

**Who could benefit from this research?**

People who could possibly benefit include infertile women, women left unable to have a baby because of cancer treatment and women in their late 30s and early 40s.

**How long until the procedure is tested on humans?**

The researchers would need approval from the Federal Government and various ethics committees before human trials could begin, which is expected to take many years.

**Is the research ethical?**

Yes. The patient's own stem cells would be used, and eggs would be used, so it remains a woman's decision. It is not like cloning.

**More Info**

Monash IVF: [www.monashivf.edu.au/index.html](http://www.monashivf.edu.au/index.html)

Fertility Society of Australia: [www.fsa.au.com](http://www.fsa.au.com)

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