

Society

S O C I E T Y S A Y S S O

COUPLES struggling to achieve pregnancy usually turn to IVF as one of the initial alternatives in the infertility domain. The IVF treatment is a good option that has worked for many couples in either the first or two to three attempts. "But, says Dr Hrishikesh Pai, leading

Assisted Reproductive Technologies (SART) has predicted about 23-27 per cent of IVF success in women between 38 to 40 years, while this

Failed

ATTEMPTS

gynaecologist and infertility specialist attached to the Lilavati and Bhatia hospitals in Mumbai, and the Fortis Group of hospitals, Delhi, "The IVF treatment may not always yield positive results for all patients. Some may get pregnant in the first cycle itself while others may not show any progressive signs even after two to three endeavours.

The In Vitro Fertilisation or IVF technique is an ART (Assisted Reproductive Technology) procedure in which the developed eggs from a woman's ovaries are fertilised with sperms in a laboratory to attain pregnancy. This fertilisation results in the creation of embryos that are then transferred to the uterus of the woman for further growth and development with an objective to achieve a successful pregnancy.

The typical IVF treatment includes stages like stimulation or super ovulation, egg retrieval, followed by insemination and fertilisation, leading to embryo

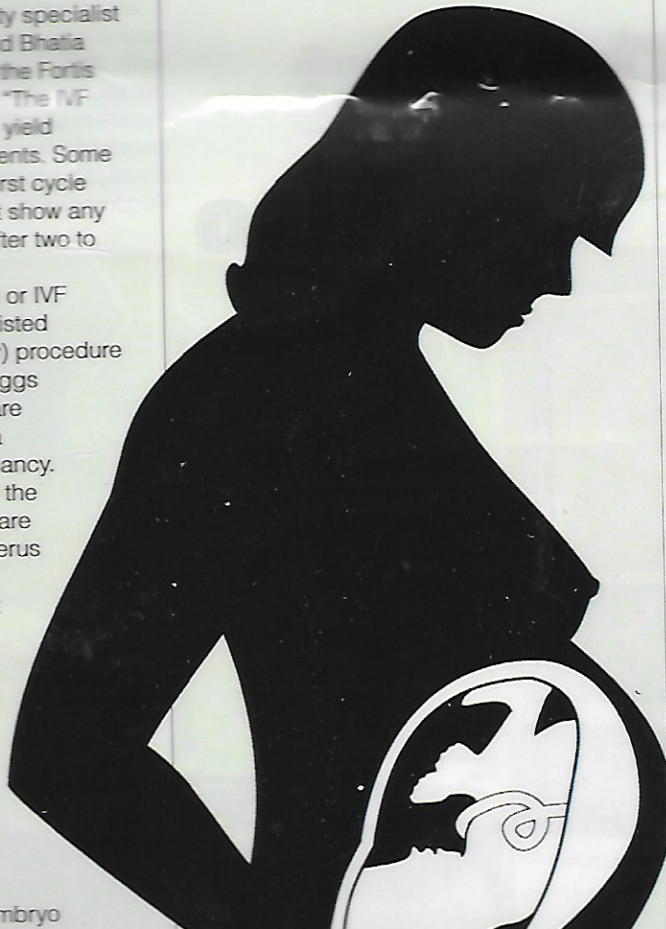


figure drops down further to 13-18 per cent in women over 41 years of age.

"Dr Nandita Palshetkar and I being the pioneers of IVF field in India have treated more than 22,000 patients over a period of 25 years. Many patients consulting us have earlier experienced recurrent IVF failures or have failed to achieve pregnancy despite transferring up to 10 good quality embryos over two to four attempts," explains Dr Pai.

The common reasons that stand as barriers during the course of an IVF treatment are:

1. Reduced ovarian response
2. Poor quality of embryos
3. Problems faced during the embryo implantation
4. The influence of the patient's age. It is a common known fact that as a woman ages, her fertility power reduces. This is because a woman is born with a certain number of eggs that get used up over a period of time. Hence, an IVF performed on a woman over 37 years of age already has its prerequisite limitations prior to starting the treatment.
5. Another factor indicating a failure is a high FSH (Follicle Stimulating Hormone) level present in some patients. These patients may show a reduced response to IVF medications that aid the production of multiple eggs required for successful IVF treatment. Therefore, a reduced number of eggs increase the chances of an IVF failure.
6. In addition to this, the embryos with certain genetic or chromosomal abnormalities are weak, leading to problems during implantation. Polyps or cysts in the ovaries, or an abrupt growth of the embryo may also hamper this process, leading to a reduced IVF success.
7. Moreover, at times, the embryos lack the number of cells required to survive the IVF treatment, and fail to fertilise, resulting in the overall failure of an IVF