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BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS FOR SAME SEX FEMALE COUPLES BUILDING FAMILIES: IN VITRO FERTILIZATION UTILIZATION SINCE THE ENACTMENT OF 2021 NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATION

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Title:
BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS FOR SAME SEX FEMALE COUPLES BUILDING FAMILIES: IN VITRO FERTILIZATION UTILIZATION SINCE THE ENACTMENT OF 2021 NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATION

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Preferred Presentation Type:
Oral or Poster

Study Type:
Retrospective Cohort Study (includes comparator groups)

Category - Subcategory(ies):
Special Populations: LGBTQ+

Funding:
None

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All Other Categories
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Abstract Text:
OBJECTIVE: Equal access to fertility care with health insurance coverage has been a challenge for LGBTQIA+ individuals seeking assistance in family building. In 2021, New York State’s (NYS) Circular Letter No. 3 expanded the definition of infertility to explicitly include LGBTQIA+ individuals and consequently supports greater insurance coverage of infertility services. Prior to 2021, a 12-month requisite waiting period inequitably created barriers to in vitro fertilization (IVF) and co-IVF treatment for same sex female couples (SSFC). The objective of this study was to evaluate the effect of the 2021 legislation on the utilization of IVF and co-IVF services by SSFC.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: This retrospective cohort study was conducted at an academic, private fertility center and included all SSFC who underwent IVF or co-IVF between 2004 and 2022. Couples were divided into two cohorts based on first consultation date since enactment of 2021 legislation (Cohort 1: 2004 to 2020; Cohort 2: 2021 to 2022). The primary outcome was time from consultation to utilization of IVF or co-IVF. The secondary outcome was time from consultation to first pregnancy discharge to local obstetrician care. Patient demographics and IVF cycle data were collected and analyzed using chi-squared and Wilcoxon Rank Sum tests. Multivariable linear regression was performed, adjusting for age, body mass index (BMI), and anti-Müllerian hormone (AMH).

RESULTS: The study evaluated 285 SSFC who underwent IVF or co-IVF (Cohort 1: n=250; Cohort 2: n=35). In Cohort 2, the median (interquartile range) length of time from consultation to start of IVF was significantly shorter than Cohort 1 (173 (182) v. 292 (432) days, p<0.01), with a statistically significant increase in SSFC initiating IVF treatment less than one year after consultation (86% v. 59%, p=0.02). On multivariate analysis, Cohort 2 started treatment 250 days earlier (95% CI 103, 397, p<0.001) than Cohort 1. Cohort 2 had a shorter, though insignificant, median time from consultation to pregnant discharge to obstetrics care (377 (263) v. 487 (495) days, p=0.06) though this data was only complete in n=15, 42% of the post-legislation cohort.

CONCLUSIONS: While barriers to accessing infertility care may be multifactorial, recent changes in NYS legislation has relaxed constraints to insurance coverage for SSFC; as New York State’s (NYS) Circular Letter No. 3 has broadened the definition of infertility to explicitly including LGBTQIA+ individuals. Since 2021, SSFCs seeking infertility care have experienced increased access to care. Our study demonstrated a shorter duration from consultation to initiation of IVF treatment and to first pregnancy discharge to obstetric care for SSFCs. Within one year of legislation enactment, fertility centers are beginning to see a higher uptake of IVF services amongst SSFC couples.

IMPACT STATEMENT: The enactment of NYS Circular Letter No. 3 has broadened the definition of infertility to explicitly include LGBTQIA+ individuals and has decreased the length of time that SSFC take to initiate IVF and co-IVF treatment.

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Biographical Sketch Dr. Samantha Estevez is a fellow in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City and Reproductive Medicine Associates of New York. Dr. Estevez earned her Bachelor of Arts in History and Women’s Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she graduated summa cum laude and with her honor’s thesis in Japanese history. She completed her medical school education at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago and her residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Donald and Barbara Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra Northwell in New York. Throughout her medical training, Dr. Estevez has received numerous awards, including Northwestern’s Global Health Initiative Scholarship, the Northwell Health Culture of Care in Action Award, and induction into the Gold Humanism Honors Society. As a resident, Dr. Estevez was the Chief Resident of Research and a member of the residency interview committee. She has authored numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals and presented at several prestigious conferences, including the American Society for Reproductive Medicine Annual Meeting, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Annual Meeting, and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health Annual Scientific Symposium. Her research and clinical interests include LGBTQIA+ fertility, access to care for underrepresented minorities, reducing health disparities, and fertility preservation.

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Biographical Sketch Margaret M. Daneyko, RN, BSN currently serves as Director of Nursing and Clinical Services at Reproductive Medicine Associates of New York. Ms. Daneyko received her BSN from University of Medicine and Dentistry/Rutgers University and has spent her entire twenty-five year career in the field of Women’s Health. Ms. Daneyko started her career as a Labor and Delivery nurse at Morristown Memorial Medical Center before transitioning to fertility services in 2001 at Reproductive Medicine Associates of New Jersey. In 2006 she went on to be the Director of the Valley Hospital Fertility Center in Paramus, NJ. In 2009 she became the Director of Outpatient Women’s and Children’s Services at The Valley Hospital. In this role she oversaw the daily operations of the Fertility Center, the Maternal Fetal Medicine Center, The Center for Children’s Development and the Family Education Center. In 2014, she joined the staff of Reproductive Medicine Associates of NY. Ms. Daneyko is passionate about providing access to reproductive care for all women in all capacities. She is a member of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine and the Association of Reproductive Managers.

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