

EDITORIAL

Certified ART Centers in Thailand

Since the first Thai test tube infant was successfully delivered at Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital, on August 18, 1987 many assisted reproductive technology (ART) centers, in both Government and private hospitals, have offered service to childless couples who are seeking help. The successes of this service are vastly different from place to place depending on the standard of practice, facility and experience of the medical personnel. At the same time, the medical procedure is very expensive with low cost effectiveness because the sophisticated equipments and drugs are totally imported. Cost of treatment seems to increase daily but the best result remains constant about 20%, in this country.

To protect the public interest and prevent malpractice the Thai Medical Council has granted an authority to the Royal Thai College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RTCOCG) to standardise the ART centers. So far 31 ART centers have been certified and categorised into class A, B or C based only on facility and equipments. While seven other applied centers are not recognised by the RTCOCG. Recognition of the RTCOCG is neither necessary nor legal for ART practice in Thailand. The Executive Committee of Royal Thai College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has now agreed that new ART centers which are applying for recognition will be visited and assessed concerning the standard of practical procedure, facility, equipments and medical personnel. In the near future, the 31 previously certified ART centers will also be reassessed similarly by a team of the RTCOCG. In addition fees for registration and renewal of registration will also have to be charged for administrative and travelling cost. However criteria for classification of ART centers must be clarified to prevent misunderstanding and disharmony between the RTCOCG and the members. The RTCOCG is also expected to receive an annual report of the practice and results of all certified ART centers for the renewal of registration. Good co-operation and understanding between the ART centers and the RTCOCG is necessary for the progress of our ART practice in the country and the protection of patient's interest.

Professor Anek Aribarg FRCOG
Editor-in-Chief