

Case Study: Greek Orthodox Christian Patient and the use of Assisted Reproductive Technology

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A Greek Orthodox couple has been trying to get pregnant for the past five years. They finally sought the consult of a fertility doctor who determined that the issue is the husband's low sperm count and poor motility. The fertility doctor shares that they are unlikely to get pregnant without Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART). She recommends that they have in-vitro fertilization with Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI), a process by which a sperm is injected directly into a harvested egg and implanted back in the uterus. There are some risks to the fetus with this process but it has a very high success rate in getting people pregnant.

The couple has concerns regarding this procedure and the possible outcomes. The Greek Orthodox Church does not support ART but the couple sees this as the only path to pregnancy. The couple asks the fertility doctor if there is a way to proceed while honoring their religious beliefs.

Reflection:

- Why does the Greek Orthodox Church not support ART? How could you get the information you needed to respond to the couple's concerns?
- Are there other options you could offer the couple that would align with their religious beliefs?
- If there are additional risks or costs associated with these options, how do you help them weigh the options?

Additional Resources:

"FAQ: Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection." Ucsfhealth.org, UCSF Health, 22 Sept. 2021, <https://www.ucsfhealth.org/education/faq-intracytoplasmic-sperm-injection#5>.

"Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection: ICSI." American Pregnancy Association, 16 July 2021, <https://americanpregnancy.org/getting-pregnant/infertility/intracytoplasmic-sperm-injection/>.

Nikolaos, Metropolitan. "Symposium: Religion in Assisted Reproduction." The Greek Orthodox Position on the Ethics of Assisted Reproduction, Nov. 2008, <http://www.bioethics.org.gr/MMLN%20assisted%20repro.pdf>.