



# Effective Health Care

## Fertility Treatment in Women

### Nomination Summary Document

#### Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- The topic, *Fertility Treatment in Women*, will go forward for refinement as a systematic review. The scope of this topic, including populations, interventions, comparators, and outcomes, will be further developed in the refinement phase.
- When key questions have been drafted, they will be posted on the AHRQ Web site and open for public comment. To sign up for notification when this and other Effective Health Care (EHC) Program topics are posted for public comment, please go to <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/join-the-email-list/>.

#### Topic Description

**Nominator(s):** Individual

**Nomination Summary:** The topic was nominated by an individual who is specifically interested in the safety and efficacy of treatments to address infertility.

**Staff-Generated PICO**

**Population(s):** Adult women

**Intervention(s):** Treatments for infertility: 1) medication (e.g., clomiphene, clomiphene citrate, gonadotropins); 2) surgery; and 3) assisted reproductive technology (ART) (e.g., intrauterine insemination, in vitro fertilization [IVF])

**Comparator(s):** Within category comparisons (i.e., medication vs. medication, surgery vs. surgery, and ART vs. ART)

**Outcome(s):** Conception, pregnancy, and safety and efficacy

**Key Questions from Nominator:** What are the best options for fertility treatment, in terms of safety and effectiveness?

#### Considerations

- The topic meets all EHC Program selection criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.)

- Infertility, which can affect both men and women, is defined as the inability to conceive after 12 months (or in six months if a woman is older than 35 years of age). Infertility in women may be caused by problems in ovulation and also may be associated with medical conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), uterine fibroids, and endometriosis.
- . Strategies to address infertility range from diet and lifestyle changes to more invasive procedures such as in vitro fertilization (IVF). Infertility can also have a negative impact on the mental health of women and their partners, making the selection of appropriate treatment critical.
- Patients and providers require a clear understanding of the comparative effectiveness of available treatment options, especially as patients consider more invasive procedures.
- A 2008 AHRQ review of assisted reproductive technology (ART) to address infertility found insufficient evidence on the topic. However, a search of the current peer-reviewed literature found a large volume of new literature on the use of fertility treatments. The new literature on ART and other options may change the 2008 report conclusions. In addition, there is sufficient literature for a systematic review on the use of medications for ovulation induction both independent of and as part of ART.
  - Myers ER, McCrory DC, Mills AA, et al. Effectiveness of Assisted Reproductive Technology. Rockville (MD): Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (US); 2008 May. (Evidence Reports/Technology Assessments, No. 167.) Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK38549>
- Given that the 2008 AHRQ review only focused on ART, a new AHRQ systematic review, which examines the new evidence for ART, as well as new evidence that has emerged for other treatments such as medications and surgery is warranted.