Experts say ovarian tissue and egg freezing should be made widely available

By ACSH Staff — October 3, 2014

[1]In a new fertility series in The Lancet [2], experts write that access to ovarian tissue and egg freezing should be made more widely available to women. Previously, these methods of egg and tissue preservation were mostly reserved for cancer patients who would otherwise be infertile after chemotherapy treatment.

The technique of extracting a woman’s eggs, freezing them, and later fertilizing and transferring them into the uterus is known as oocyte cryopreservation. With ovarian tissue cryopreservation, part of the ovary is removed, frozen, and eventually thawed and re-implanted where it can produce new eggs. Replacement of the ovarian tissue requires surgery and might seem more onerous than egg retrieval, but it is a straightforward and uneventful procedure, writes co-author Dr. Sherman Silber. Both methods have resulted in successful births of healthy babies to cancer patients.

Dr. Silber and co-authors Dr. Dominic Stoop and Dr. Ana Cobo write that they believe these methods might be used to preserve fertility in healthy women who have not had cancer and are looking to counter age-related infertility. The methods also reduce the need for egg donors and artificial reproductive techniques.

Female fertility begins to decline at an accelerated rate after the age of 35 however, more and more women are delaying having children for several reasons, including pursuing careers, having not found the right partner, and simply not being ready to have children. With access to oocyte and ovarian tissue cryopreservation, the pressure many women feel to start a family before they are ready due to their ticking biological clock may be greatly reduced.