

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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UT SOUTHWESTERN AWARDED \$1 MILLION NIH GRANT TO STUDY INFERTILITY AS PART OF NATIONAL NETWORK

DALLAS – Oct. 4, 2000 – A \$1 million, five-year grant from the National Institutes of Health will make UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas part of a nine-institution national infertility network.

The award from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development establishes the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology's place in this new Cooperative Multicenter Reproductive Medicine Network. Dr. Bruce Carr, professor of obstetrics and gynecology, co-director of the UT Southwestern Clinical Center for Women's Health, holder of the Paul C. MacDonald Distinguished Chair in Obstetrics and Gynecology, and director of the reproductive endocrinology and infertility division, is the principal investigator at UT Southwestern.

"We are very excited to be a part of the new research network," Carr said, which will involve patients from both the James W. Aston Ambulatory Care Center and Parkland Memorial Hospital. "The competition for these monies was very intense, and being chosen by the child development institute signals a major recognition for those schools selected. Only medical schools with a large amount of previous experience and national recognition in peer-reviewed publications were considered."

Carr said physicians in the network will not only be researching infertility, but also will be searching for answers to perplexing questions about women's reproductive systems. All nine network centers will be involved in each research project.

Some of the questions to be explored include:

- What is the prevalence of progesterone deficiency in infertile women? (Progesterone is a hormone that prepares the lining of the uterus for implantation of a fertilized egg and readies the mammary glands to secrete milk.)

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- Why is progesterone production inadequate in some women?
- How does “drilling,” a procedure of making a small cut in the ovary, called an ovarian wedge, by means of laser surgery or other appropriate surgical technique, work? Is it because it causes the androgen level to be lowered? Is it because the opening may increase the flow of blood into the ovary, or is it something else?
- Will embryo “hatching,” or encouraging the embryo to divide early, help pregnancy rates?
- What are the best ways to induce pregnancy in women with polycystic ovarian syndrome, a condition that causes infertility?
- What is the best way to treat endometriosis?

Other institutions that are part of the Cooperative Multicenter Reproductive Medicine Network include the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, the University of Colorado School of Medicine, Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine, Wayne State University School of Medicine, the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Duke University School of Medicine, Baylor College of Medicine and the University of Alabama School of Medicine.

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