

DEMAND FOR PRIVATE FERTILITY TREATMENTS IN UK HAS INCREASED BY OVER A THIRD (38%) IN PAST YEAR

- Enquiries for fertility specialist consultations increased by almost a half (49%)
- Most popular treatment in UK clinics is intrauterine insemination (IUI), demand increased by almost a third (31%)
- IVF treatment enquiries increased by 45%, with average starting price tag of £2,236
- Fertility testing saw the biggest increase in enquiries since last year, up 170%
- Spain, Czech Republic and Turkey are the most popular destinations for Brits seeking fertility treatment abroad
- Enquiries from UK patients to fertility clinics in Spain increased by 145% in the past year, and IVF enquiries increased by an incredible 347%

Date: The UK experienced a huge surge in those seeking private fertility treatments in the past year with enquiries for procedures up by over a third (38%)*. Demand also increased for fertility specialist consultations, up almost a half (49%) at an average cost of £179 per appointment, according to new research from global healthcare search engine, WhatClinic.com.

According to the NHS, there are approximately 3.5 million people in the UK who have difficulty conceiving, that's almost one in seven couples¹. The most popular treatment in the UK is intrauterine insemination (IUI) - a procedure which separates fast-moving sperm from the more sluggish or non-moving sperm which is then placed in the womb close to the time of ovulation – and enquiries increased by 31% since last year. The specialised treatment has an average price tag in the UK of £802.

Enquiries for private in vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatment increased by 45% and costs £2,236, on average, in the UK. The NHS provides free access to IVF treatment for eligible women under the age of 43 but has strict guidelines and criteria so many women seek help privately or abroad.

Egg freezing, which topped the list in 2015, also saw a steady increase in enquiries, up by over a third (34%) since last year. The procedure, which costs £2,716, on average, is commonly recommended for women undergoing medical treatment which might affect their fertility and is also used by women who are worried about their fertility declining. Fertility testing saw the biggest increase in enquiries since last year, up 170%, and costs £370, on average, in UK clinics.

Commenting on the trends, fertility expert **Dr Shipra Krishna, Director at London IVF and Genetics Centre** said, "Over 3.5 million people experience fertility problems in the UK and a third of these will need some form of assisted fertility treatment. There has been an increase in demand for specialist treatments ranging from IUI to IVF or ICSI or preimplantation genetic screening to egg or sperm donation. Increasingly, men and women are putting off having a family until they are older which can

often lead to fertility issues. Besides age, there are a range of other factors such as lifestyle, dietary, chronic stress to name a few that might also be playing a role, though not conclusively proven. However, such services are now more easily available in the UK and outcomes have improved considerably.”

The following table shows the increase in enquiries for fertility treatments in the UK compared to last year, and the average cost:

Top 10 Fertility Treatments in UK based on patient email enquiries to clinics listed on WhatClinic.com		
Treatment	Increase in email enquiries over the past year	UK average starting price (£)
Fertility Specialist Consultation	49%	£179
IUI - Intrauterine Insemination	31%	£802
IVF - In Vitro Fertilisation	45%	£2,236
Egg Freezing	34%	£2,716
Fertility Test	170%	£370
Egg Donor	-5%	£3,069
AI - Artificial Insemination	111%	£1,014
ICSI - Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection	14%	£3,314
Embryo Donation	121%	£1,965
PGD - Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis	110%	£3,013

Many Brits continue to seek fertility treatment abroad and Spain, the Czech Republic and Turkey topped the list as the most popular overseas destinations**. IVF is the most common treatment that Brits seek abroad, and enquiries to clinics in Spain increased by a whopping 347% in the past year.

Spain remains a popular destination for fertility treatment year-on-year, despite the fact that the cost of treatment is often lower in the UK, according to WhatClinic’s data. In total, there were 1,463 enquiries made by UK patients to fertility clinics in Spain (by phone and email) in the past 12 months, up from 598 in the previous 12 month period.

The Czech Republic offers the largest saving on fertility treatment compared to the UK, particularly for preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) which saw an increase in enquiries of 162% and potential savings of £2,483. Egg freezing is also cheaper in the Czech Republic, saving Brits up to £2,424, and saw an increase of 175% in enquiries. Other popular medical tourism destinations for fertility procedures include Greece, Cyprus, Poland and India.

The following table shows the fertility treatments that have seen the largest increase in enquiries from Brits to clinics overseas in the past year, and the price comparison for each compared to the UK:

Top Fertility Treatment enquiries for overseas clinics based on patient email enquiries to clinics listed on WhatClinic.com					
Treatment	Destination	Increase in enquiries from Brits	Local average starting price (£)	UK average starting price (£)	Possible savings (£)
IVF - In Vitro Fertilisation	Spain	347%	£3,247	£2,236	-£1,011
IVF - In Vitro Fertilisation	Czech Republic	153%	£787	£2,236	£1,450
IVF - In Vitro Fertilisation	Turkey	284%	£1,914	£2,236	£322
Egg Donor	Spain	107%	£4,727	£3,069	-£1,658
IVF - In Vitro Fertilisation	Greece	124%	£2,213	£2,236	£24
IVF - In Vitro Fertilisation	Cyprus	215%	£2,000	£2,236	£236
IVF - In Vitro Fertilisation	Poland	276%	£1,292	£2,236	£944
Embryo Donation	Spain	233%	£1,607	£1,965	£358
PGD - Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis	Czech Republic	162%	£530	£3,013	£2,483

Egg Donor	India	115%	£787	£3,069	£2,282
Egg Freezing	Czech Republic	175%	£292	£2,716	£2,424
ICSI - Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection	Spain	93%	£2,644	£3,314	£670
IVF - In Vitro Fertilisation	India	200%	£1,617	£2,236	£619
IUI - Intrauterine Insemination	Czech Republic	170%	£187	£802	£615
IVF - In Vitro Fertilisation	Bulgaria	373%	£337	£2,236	£1,900

Commenting on the data trends in fertility treatment in the UK and abroad, **Emily Ross, Director of WhatClinic** said, “The number of people seeking help with fertility issues, both here and from overseas clinics, is growing significantly according to our figures. While the NHS provides access to in demand treatments like IVF, there are many restrictions around who will be provided treatment based on age, weight and a host of other factors. There are also long waiting lists in many areas, and with time being a critical factor, this drives many people to look overseas for fertility treatment.

“Overseas healthcare and medical tourism is often driven by price, but when it comes to fertility, price isn't the main factor behind people's travel. There are also some extremely high quality clinics overseas that have specialised in advanced fertility treatment. Through online research and from word of mouth, these clinics are attracting patients from the UK based on treatment availability and their proven expertise.”

-Ends-

Notes to editors:

*Data based on patient email enquiries sent to UK fertility clinics listed on WhatClinic.com in the period 01/03/2015 to 01/03/2016 compared to 01/03/2014 to 01/03/2015.

**Data based on patient email enquiries sent to overseas fertility clinics listed on WhatClinic.com in the period 01/03/2015 to 01/03/2016 compared to 01/03/2014 to 01/03/2015.

References:

1. <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Infertility/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

About WhatClinic.com:

WhatClinic.com is a global healthcare comparison website that enables patients to compare and review clinics across the globe, with online booking and independent price checks. With detailed listings for over 120,000 private healthcare clinics across 135 countries worldwide, WhatClinic.com helps consumers make an informed decision on elective medical treatments as conveniently as possible. WhatClinic.com was founded in 2007 by tech entrepreneur Caelen King and is headquartered in Dublin. Since its launch, over 60 million people have visited the site to find, compare and book treatments across a wide range of elective medical treatment.