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WHAT DO PATIENTS ASK ABOUT FERTILITY PRESERVATION (FP)? A GOOGLE SEARCH ANALYSIS

Jiwoo Park, BA¹, Emily A Clarke, M.D.¹, Diana Shaari, BA¹, Lily Leibner, BA¹, Hajer Naveed, BA¹, Renee Ren, BA¹, Joseph A. Lee, BA², Erkan Buyuk, M.D.³ and Alan B. Copperman, M.D.³, (1)Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, NY, (2)Reproductive Medicine Associates of New York, New York, NY, (3)Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai/Reproductive Medicine Associates of New York, New York, NY

Title:

WHAT DO PATIENTS ASK ABOUT FERTILITY PRESERVATION (FP)? A GOOGLE SEARCH ANALYSIS

Submitter's E-mail Address:

jiwoo.park@icahn.mssm.edu

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Patient Centered Care: Access to Care

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Patient Centered Care: General

References:

1. Shao, YH et al. JOGC. 2020; 42,5: 561-567. doi:10.1016/j.jogc.2019.10.029
2. Kasthuri V, et al. N Am Spine Soc J. 2023;14:100214. doi: 10.1016/j.xnsj.2023.100214.
3. Silberg WM, et al. JAMA. 1997;277(15):1244-5. doi:10.1001/jama.1997.03540390074039

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Nothing to disclose. No off-label or otherwise non-approved product use.

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Applied for the Resident In-Training Award

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Abstract Text:

OBJECTIVE: With rising rates of fertility preservation (FP), more patients are turning to online resources for information regarding assisted reproductive technologies (ART), including egg and embryo cryopreservation.¹ This study aims to examine the most frequently searched online questions related to FP, with a focus on assessing the credibility of digital resources providing answers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: Using Google's "People Also Ask" (PAA) feature, the study analyzed frequently searched questions related to fertility preservation. A Python-based automated extraction tool retrieved the top 200 questions and linked to website pairs when the following search terms: "fertility preservation," "fertility preservation options," "egg freezing," and "embryo freezing" were used. Each query was conducted using a fresh incognito browser session. Duplicate combinations, irrelevant questions, or invalid links were excluded. Extracted questions were categorized according to Rothwell's Classification system (Fact, Policy, Value).² Corresponding websites were categorized into academic, commercial, non-academic private medical practice, government, or news media.² Website credibility was evaluated using the JAMA Benchmark Criteria, which assesses Authorship, Attribution (sources), Disclosures (ownership and funding), and Currency (publication date), with sites scored 0 (low credibility) to 4 (high credibility).³

RESULTS: A total of 333 unique questions and website pairs across search terms were included in the analysis. The majority of questions were categorized as "Fact" (n=177, 53.2%), then "Value" (n=86, 25.8%) and "Policy" (n=70, 21.0%). Most of the questions were focused on technical details regarding the implementation of the procedure (n=89, 26.8%), evaluation of the procedure (including success rates, invasiveness, benefits) (n=83, 24.9%), cost (including insurance coverage) (n=68, 20.4%), and indications for the procedure (including eligibility) (n=57, n=17.1%). There were fewer questions regarding risks/complications (n=13, 3.9%), specific activities a patient could do during the FP process (n=9, 2.7%), recovery timeline (n=9, 2.7%), pain (n=3, 0.9%), and activity restrictions before or after the procedure (n=2, 0.6%). Regarding information sources, medical practice websites were most frequent (n=126, 37.9%), followed by academic (n=80, 24.0%), commercial (n=78, 23.4%), government (n=28, 8.4%), and media (n=21, 6.3%). The overall average JAMA Benchmark Criteria score was 2.2 ± 1.2 across sources, indicating partially sufficient data.

CONCLUSIONS: Patients most frequently searched for fact-based information about FP, with particular focus on procedural details and associated costs. The JAMA benchmark scores indicated partially sufficient data of the online resources, suggesting variable credibility of information.

IMPACT STATEMENT: Patient search behavior underscores a persistent need for accessible, accurate fertility information, warranting greater clinician involvement in the development and dissemination of trustworthy digital resources.

First Presenting Author

Presenting Author

Jiwoo Park, BA

Email: jiwoo.park@icahn.mssm.edu -- Will not be published

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Science
1176 Fifth Ave, Klingenstein Pavilion
9th Floor
New York NY 10029
USA

Within the past 2 years, have you or your spouse/partner had any potential COI?

No

Signature: Jiwoo Park



CV Upload:

 [Park, Jiwoo_CV_Apr2025.docx](#)

Second Author

Emily A Clarke, M.D.

Email: emilyclarkemd@gmail.com -- Will not be published

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Science
1176 Fifth Ave, Klingenstein Pavilion
9th floor
New York NY 10029
USA

Within the past 2 years, have you or your spouse/partner had any potential COI?

No

Signature: Emily Clarke, MD



CV Upload:

 [Emily Clarke CV 02.2025.docx](#)

Third Author

Diana Shaari, BA

Email: diana.shaari@icahn.mssm.edu -- Will not be published

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Science
1176 Fifth Ave, Klingenstein Pavilion
9th Floor
New York NY 10029
USA

Within the past 2 years, have you or your spouse/partner had any potential COI?

No

Signature: Diana Shaari

Fourth Author

Lily Leibner, BA

Email: Lilyleibner@gmail.com -- Will not be published

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Science
1176 Fifth Ave, Klingenstein Pavilion
9th Floor
New York NY 10029
USA

Within the past 2 years, have you or your spouse/partner had any potential COI?

No

Signature: Lily Leibner, BA

Fifth Author

Hajer Naveed, BA

Email: hajer.naveed@icahn.mssm.edu -- Will not be published

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Science
1176 Fifth Ave, Klingenstein Pavilion
9th Floor
New York NY 10029
USA

Within the past 2 years, have you or your spouse/partner had any potential COI?

No

Signature: Hajer Naveed

CV Upload:



[Hajer Naveed _ CV.pdf](#)

Sixth Author

Renee Ren, BA

Email: Renee.ren@icahn.mssm.edu -- Will not be published

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Science
1176 Fifth Ave, Klingenstein Pavilion
9th Floor
New York NY 10029
USA

Within the past 2 years, have you or your spouse/partner had any potential COI?

No

Signature: Ren

Seventh Author

Joseph A. Lee, BA

Email: jlee@rmany.com -- Will not be published

Reproductive Medicine Associates of New York
635 Madison Ave 10th Fl
New York NY 10022-1009
USA

Biographical Sketch Early success, marked by his first publication in CELL at Harvard Medical School, inspired Joseph to continue his research endeavors in reproductive endocrinology and infertility. Joseph has been with Reproductive Medicine Associates of New York since 2011. Joseph has authored over 400 peer-reviewed abstracts & manuscripts. Passionate about development, he cultivates relationship with investors & entrepreneurs to advance reproductive endocrinology & infertility care.

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No

Signature: Joseph Adam Lee



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 [Joseph Lee CV.docx](#)

Eighth Author

Erkan Buyuk, M.D.

Email: ebuyuk@rmaofny.com -- Will not be published

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai/Reproductive Medicine Associates of New York
Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Science
New York NY
USA

Within the past 2 years, have you or your spouse/partner had any potential COI?

No

Signature: Erkan Buyuk, M.D.

Ninth Author

Alan B. Copperman, M.D.

Email: acopperman@rmany.com -- Will not be published

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai/Reproductive Medicine Associates of New York
Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Science
New York NY
USA

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