

Fertility preservation for female cancer patients: the italian experience of Gemme Dormienti ONLUS

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Abstract Body

Background: The demand for fertility preservation (FP) for oncological patients has grown exponentially in recent years. Considering the rising trend in delaying childbearing and the higher number of patients who have not completed their family planning, FP is proving to be a major challenge in the future. Gemme dormienti Onlus (GD) is an italian no profit association that had helped from 2013 a large population of pre and post-pubertal female and male patients, promoting a valid model for FP counseling with an active network of gynaecologists, oncologists, hematologists and other specialists.

Methods: This is a single-center, prospective, observational study of a subgroup of 870 female patients referred to GD. We offered different FP options: gonadotropin-releasing hormone agonist (GnRHa) and/or cryopreservation of oocyte and/or ovarian tissue cryopreservation (OTC). All patients underwent the same instrumental and laboratory tests.

Results: We observed a progressive increasing number of patients referred for FP. All patients, with a median age of 32 years, had diagnosis of hematological (72,5%), oncological (23,2%) or no neoplastic conditions (4,3%); 86 women underwent oocyte cryopreservation and GnRHa, 158 OTC and GnRHa, 277 GnRHa therapy and 7 followed all the three treatments.

Despite the long-lasting trend towards delayed parenthood, 204 women had already had pregnancies before cancer diagnosis; nevertheless 15 of them underwent oocyte cryopreservation or OTC. Previously data showed that 25 patients had post treatment spontaneous pregnancies.

A subgroup analysis of 295 patients suggested that the time between diagnosis and first FP counseling is decreasing from 2013 to nowadays ($p < .0001$), allowing a faster access to cure and showing the growing awareness of FP treatment.

Conclusion: Our preliminary data shows the increased importance of FP to promote and improve a better quality of life in female cancer patients.