

IVF Debate

Teacher notes

Structured debate: Should IVF be available on the NHS?

Characters

Pro:-

- *Bekele & Alison Sissoko (Married couple)*
- *Dr. Jean Francis (pro IVF doctor)*
- Dai Morris (IVF child)
- Marie & Sally Osborne (Same sex couple)

Against:-

- *John Wilson (person with illness)*
- *Isobel Lewis (Antiabortionist)*
- Dr. Sudha Tripathi (anti IVF doctor)
- Sally Robbins (Adoption worker)

If you have enough students to make 8 groups, then you can use all eight positions, or use fewer, as you wish. This game can work with as few as four students – taking the 'essential' positions (printed in italics), this gives two for and two against.

Facilitation tips

Ensure students know there is no right or wrong answer.

Be observant for ones who want to speak and aren't getting a chance.

For groups who may need extra support you can put the following prompt sentences up on the board:

"I think IVF should/shouldn't be paid for by the NHS because....."

"I think is the most important thing to think about"

IVF short summary

(most info emerges during the activity, through the character cards, but you may want to introduce the topic with some of this background)

IVF stands for In Vitro Fertilisation, a technique for various forms of infertility. An ovum and sperm are mixed together outside a woman's body. Children born by the technique are sometimes called test-tube babies, but the mixing is actually usually done in a Petri dish. Fertilised eggs are then implanted into the woman's womb.

A woman will have to have extensive hormone treatments before having IVF. These stimulate her ovaries so that lots of follicles develop to produce eggs, all at once (instead of just one per month as usual). These eggs are collected using an ultrasound-guided needle, which enters the ovaries through the vaginal wall. The eggs are then mixed with the sperm and incubated for 18 hours. After a few days usually two of the healthiest looking embryos are implanted into the woman's womb. The success rate is approximately 28% of women becoming pregnant per cycle of treatment.

A point of clarification

(relates to info on the character cards)

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) (an independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on the promotion of good health), recommended in 2004 that the NHS should pay for up to 3 cycles of IVF for anyone between the ages of 23 and 39 without children. However, there is still a so-called postcode lottery and in most areas couples will get one round of treatment.