International Federation of Fertility Societies
Surveillance 2010: preface

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Surveillance is a triennial worldwide compendium of national rules and regulations for assisted reproductive technology. It was last published in 2007. (Fertil Steril® 2011;95:491. ©2011 by American Society for Reproductive Medicine.)

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For this edition of Surveillance we are without the spirited discussion and thoughtful contributions of Jean Cohen, a cofounder of Surveillance, who died in August 2007, soon after the 2007 version was presented in Durban, South Africa. Jean had initiated the move to electronic communication, which has been a crucial part of the data gathering for the present volume.

We are indebted to Keith Gordon, Ph.D., Medical Director, Schering Corporation, Schering-Plough and Santosh T. Varghese, M.D., Vice President, Primary Care and Cardiovascular, Global Medical Affairs, Schering-Plough Corporation of Kenilworth, New Jersey for their support that led to the development of the software for data collection and its initial presentation by Chris Graham, M.Comp., Managing Director of oc Products, LTD, Sheffield, United Kingdom. With the mechanism secured, we made e-mail contact with 340 addresses. From these, 195 addressees responded, and 175 responses were usable from 105 countries. Most countries had two respondents, but 41 countries had only a single return. In some cases there were conflicting answers, although it was often possible to determine the correct one by other comments made. If errors are found, please make contact with the International Federation of Fertility Societies (IFFS) Secretariat (IFFSECRETARIAT@talley.com). If you would like to be a future correspondent or your country’s data are not recorded, do make contact, because we would like to have another data collection round in 2012.

The striking change in this edition is the huge increase in the data garnered from many more countries than the 59 gathered in 2007. This shows how assisted reproductive technology (ART) has spread to distant parts. There has also been a substantial increase in the numbers of clinics in many parts of the world, mostly in those that were early in the field. More sophisticated techniques are offered, and there has been a corresponding increase in regulatory activity. It is likely that those countries entering more recently will in turn require regulatory supervision as their societies insist on oversight. The ethical discussions are influenced by cultural perspectives, which seem to dictate the various ART methods made available.

An increasing problem will be the cost of procedures. As ART spreads to parts of the world with fewer resources, there will be greater urgency to seek less-costly processes. The economic aspects remain a problem because few countries offer insurance or state support. This in turn influences the number of embryos transferred and the persistently high multiple pregnancy rates in most countries.

The authors of the first Surveillance wished to determine whether there was international consensus in areas of reproductive technology, although they began to realize, as time progressed, that this was unlikely. Surveillance 2010 shows this heterogeneity in all aspects of ART. In some ways this is to be celebrated, but all can learn from the best.

The authors are grateful for continuing interest in this compendium, which is to be presented at the IFFS Munich meeting. The material will be available on the IFFS Web site (http://www.iffs-reproduction.org).

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