

## **Coping with Infertility Without Compromising Your Sex Life**

By Jana Frances-Fischer, Ph.D.

Infertility can challenge and strain even the most healthy and happy of partnerships. For many couples, sexual intimacy is a fundamental aspect of their relationship. When faced with infertility, couples often report that their sex life goes down the drain, gets put on the back burner, and has become focused on baby-making, not love-making. What was once fun and spontaneous is now an arduous, sometimes even dreaded task. Timed sex, intercourse in prescribed positions, refraining from sexual relations during certain times of the month, and infertility medication that can make women feel bloated and undesirable, can all add up to near disaster in a marriage.

Romantic encounters might become stale or lack imagination because having sex becomes equated solely with being able to conceive, achieve a viable pregnancy and produce a healthy full-term live birth. Sometimes a couple's sex life does not recover from prolonged years of medical treatments, and the emotional roller coaster of dashed hopes when cycle upon cycle, month after month fails and no pregnancy occurs. This long process can feel devastating for even the most committed of couples. Mutual sexual desire and satisfaction may

become a low priority for men and women whose emotional reserves are taxed and stretched to the limit during infertility treatment. It is common that men and women feel that while undergoing infertility and medical treatment everything else, but not sex, is a priority at this time. Couples might even believe they have "failed" at sex because they feel very unsexy while working hard to have a baby, and they have no children to show for it.

There are some couples whose sex life was never really that important or satisfying to one or both partners prior to their infertility struggles. In these cases, infertility and subsequent treatments can highlight these sexual shortcomings, tensions or problems and intensify couple conflict or further disdain of sexual relations, whether recreational or procreative. A trip to Europe, or even to the movies, might seem more enticing or exciting than sexual relations at this point to couples who are experiencing sexual tension, frustration and/or disappointment, heightened by their brushes with infertility.

What can couples do? Re-connecting and re-exploring each other in a sexually intimate way does not necessarily mean the result always ends in sexual intercourse. Taking the pressure off and perhaps enjoying a bubble bath together, a mutual massage or a long, warm cuddle can be both a satisfying and a bonding experience. Many other activities and forms of emotional and physical expression can still be fun and meaningful as well. There is no one size fits all in terms of self and/or partner sexual satisfaction in a relationship. It is helpful if you and your partner can openly talk about sexual needs, desires and feelings. Sometimes it can be freeing and less stressful to recognize that men and women might not have the same level of sex drive and that meanings attributed to their own sexuality and/or that of their intimate relationship might differ.

Also, it is commonly acknowledged that sex lives can and do change over time for most couples. Typically, the longer

*Continued on page 6*

**RESOLVE of the Bay State to become  
Resolve of New England**

*Stay tuned for the official announcement!*

**SAVE THE DATES:**

**Adoption Decision Making Seminar  
Saturday, January 30, 2010**

**Donor Egg Decision Making Seminar  
Saturday, February 6, 2010**

*(See page 3 for more information.)*

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### **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS WINTER 2010**

- Resolving Without Parenting • Adoption Decision Making Seminar
- Donor Egg Decision Making Seminar • Journey Through the IVF Laboratory • Talking to Your Children About Donor Conception

## RESOLVE INFORMATION

**It's easy to become a member of RESOLVE. Go to our website and click on "Membership."**

Household Membership: \$55/year

Professional Membership: \$150/year

### RESOLVE of the Bay State Member Benefits

RESOLVE of the Bay State provides compassionate and informed support and education to people experiencing infertility and seeking to build a family.

**Chapter HelpLine** — 781-890-2225, for information and support from a trained callback volunteer.

**Quarterly Newsletter** — co-published with RESOLVE of Greater Hartford

**Insurance Call-in Hours** — 781-890-2225, for assistance with your insurance problems. Check our website or this newsletter for scheduled hours.

**Educational Programs** — reduced fees for varied monthly presentations by experts in the fields of infertility, donor egg, or adoption. Also day-long seminars providing an in-depth look at one topic.

**Professionally-Led Support Groups** — a variety of time-limited groups that meet on a weekly basis, for women and couples, led by a licensed therapist. Many members state that their support group participation was the best thing they did for themselves during their infertility.

**Monthly Peer Discussion Groups** — open forums held at various locations providing information and support to people interested in learning more about their infertility and RESOLVE. Groups focusing on specific areas of interest are held in our Waltham office.

**Discounts** — members can attend all Peer Discussion Groups free of charge and receive substantial discounts on programs and literature.

**Annual Conference** — discounted fee for this day-long educational event with over 40 workshops focusing on infertility treatment, emotional issues, donor egg and adoption.

**Directory of Services** — a resource book of infertility, mental health, donor egg, and adoption services published annually.

**Advocacy** — for protection of the Massachusetts insurance mandate and continued legislative and insurance reform.

**Member-to-Member Connection** — members are matched with member volunteers who share similar experiences or who have a specific area of expertise.

**Chapter Library** — located in the Waltham office. Call for hours.

**Volunteer Opportunities** — we depend on volunteers for many of our services. Feel good helping others facing similar challenges.

### RESOLVE of Greater Hartford Member Benefits

RESOLVE of Greater Hartford is the Connecticut Chapter of RESOLVE, Inc. Join the Greater Hartford Chapter and you automatically become a member of National RESOLVE.

**In addition to the quarterly newsletter co-published with the Bay State chapter, and the Annual Conference held in Massachusetts, benefits include:**

**Chapter HelpLine** — 860-523-8337 for information and support from a trained callback volunteer.

**Educational Programs** — varied presentations by experts in the fields of infertility, insurance or adoption.

**Monthly Peer Support Groups** — groups are open to individuals or couples experiencing primary or secondary infertility. Meetings are free for members.

**Lending Library** — free of charge for all members. Please e-mail [info@resolveofgreaterhartford.org](mailto:info@resolveofgreaterhartford.org) for a list of current books.

**Advocacy** — for protection of the Connecticut insurance mandate and continued legislative and insurance reform. Please contact [resolvetadvocacy@yahoo.com](mailto:resolvetadvocacy@yahoo.com) or 860-523-8337 for any CT insurance or advocacy questions.

**Member-to-Member Contact/Friendships** — finding people who have traveled or are currently traveling this same journey, to share your emotions and situations with, can make you a stronger person/couple in dealing with your fertility.

**Volunteer Opportunities** — please contact 860-523-8337 or [info@resolveofgreaterhartford.org](mailto:info@resolveofgreaterhartford.org) if you are interested in becoming a volunteer.

### National Benefits

**Discounts on RESOLVE literature** — a variety of written materials on every aspect of infertility.

**Online Community** — Access 10 bulletin boards at [www.resolve.org](http://www.resolve.org), including Getting Started, Adoption, IVF and High-Tech Procedures, Third Party Reproduction, Pregnancy After Infertility, Parenting After Infertility, Male Perspective, Secondary Infertility, Pregnancy Loss, and High FSH.

**Also** — National RESOLVE's comprehensive website: [www.resolve.org](http://www.resolve.org)



## RESOLVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

RESOLVE of the Bay State is pleased to announce our WINTER programs, designed to provide information and support to people experiencing infertility. Meetings combine formal presentations with ample opportunities for discussion with presenters and members of the audience. **FEES** (unless indicated otherwise): \$20 per person for non-members; \$10 per person for RESOLVE members. **Register** in advance for these programs via email to our office, [admin@resolveofthebaystate.org](mailto:admin@resolveofthebaystate.org), or by calling our HelpLine and leaving a message, 781-890-2225.

### Resolving Without Parenting

With Merle Bombardieri, LICSW, Wellspring Counseling Center

For some people who have worked at pregnancy with their own gametes, the idea of an adopted child, or a child through donor conception, insemination or donor egg, may not be acceptable. Resolving without parenting might be the right solution for them, but it's often hard to be excited about this choice. Some people come to this choice because their relationship and other life pursuits are quite fulfilling; others come reluctantly because their partner is uncomfortable with alternative ways of parenting.

This workshop will look at the pros and cons and myths about this choice, how couples can overcome disagreement, how to include children and families in your life and meet the needs that children often meet for their parents, how a couple can heal anger and resentment and make the most of their relationship if one person would have preferred parenting; and the role that grief work plays in the decision-making process and in facilitating a rewarding childfree life. Emphasis will be on practical techniques for healing, guidelines for communicating, and decision-making.

Merle Bombardieri, LICSW, is a speaker, author, therapist in private practice in Lexington, and is the former Clinical Director of RESOLVE. She has spent over 30 years counseling women and couples on infertility, decision making for ending medical treatment, adoption, egg donation, and resolving without parenting. Merle is the author of *The Baby Decision* and of numerous RESOLVE articles, Boston Globe, and national magazines articles. Merle also runs expanded workshops on helping couples to decide whether or not to live child-free.

**When:** Sat., Jan. 23, 2010, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 noon

**Where:** Lasell College, Rosen Auditorium in the Brennan Library Building, 80-A Maple Street, Newton, MA 02466

### Your Sperm, Eggs, and Embryos: Journey through the IVF Laboratory

With Diane T. Dalo, MS, GS (ABB), Clinical Embryologist, MGH Fertility Center

The care and development of your gametes (sperm and egg), and embryos in the IVF laboratory is a significant component of your IVF cycle. This program will help you understand what goes on behind the scenes as embryologists make critical decisions regarding your embryos, to ensure your greatest

individual chances for success. Topics that will be highlighted include interpreting your fertilization results (whether you have had ICSI or conventional insemination), cleavage-stage development, and blastocyst development. Common concerns will be addressed such as: Why did I have a day-2 or day-3 transfer? What is assisted hatching, and why is it a part of my cycle? How do you determine whether I have a day-3 or day-5 blastocyst transfer? Why were none of my embryos frozen following my embryo transfer?

**When:** Sat., Feb. 27, 2010, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 noon

**Where:** Lasell College, Rosen Auditorium in the Brennan Library Building, 80-A Maple Street, Newton, MA 02466

### Talking to Your Children About Donor Conception: When, Why, and How?

With Audrey Rubin, MD, MPH; Miriam Ornstein, MD, and Sharon Weinstein, MD - Harvard-affiliated child and family psychiatrists

How should I tell my child about his or her origins? With so many ways to build a family, the questions of “if,” “how,” “what,” and “when” to talk with children about their families’ and their own creation are challenging and thought-provoking. If you are considering, in the process of, or have already become parents through the use of donor conception (donor egg, donor insemination, or surrogacy), you have probably contemplated how to talk about this choice with your children and others who are important to you.

This workshop will guide you through this emotionally laden decision-making process and help you examine the impact of your choices. We will explore the risks and benefits of speaking openly with children at various developmental stages, as well as the issues involved in maintaining privacy and confidentiality. We will talk about the challenges of facing questions and responses from others, as well as strategies for addressing concerns. A movie, *Telling and Talking About Donor Conception* by Leisel Evans (2006 Donor Conception Network), will be shown to facilitate discussion.

**When:** Sat., Mar. 20, 2010, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**Where:** Village Fertility Pharmacy, 335 Bear Hill Road, Waltham, MA 02451

**Special Fees:** Non-members: \$25 per person, \$45 per couple. RESOLVE members: \$15 per person, \$25 per couple.

## BAY STATE – PEER DISCUSSION GROUPS – GENERAL INFERTILITY

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Waltham</b></p> <p>RESOLVE office, 395 Totten Pond Road, Ste 403          Wednesdays, 7:00–9:00 p.m.          February 3 and March 3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Stoughton</b></p> <p>Whole Person Health, 294 Pleasant St (Rte 139)          Thursdays, 7:00–9:00 p.m.          January 21, February 18, and March 18</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Amherst</b></p> <p>The Arbors at Amherst, 100 University Drive          Wednesdays, 7:00–9:00 p.m.          February 3 and March 3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Worcester</b></p> <p>Tatnuck Park at Worcester, 340 May St.          Wednesdays, 7:00–8:30 p.m.          January 20, February 17, and March 17</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Warwick, RI</b></p> <p>Diversified Resources, 70 Jefferson Blvd., 2nd floor          Wednesdays, 6:00–8:00 p.m.          January 27, February 24, and March 31</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Boston</b></p> <p>Morville House, 100 Norway Street – near Symphony Hall          Wednesdays, 6:00–8:00 p.m.          January 20, February 17, and March 17</p>

## MASSACHUSETTS – PEER DISCUSSION GROUPS – TOPIC-ORIENTED

**These meetings are held in our Waltham Office, 395 Totten Pond Rd., Suite 403, Waltham**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Pregnancy Loss Discussion Group</b></p> <p>This group will focus on support and acceptance for individuals who have experienced miscarriage/stillbirth/ectopic pregnancy/recurrent pregnancy loss. Come and talk with others about the impact of loss on all aspects of life, coping strategies, decision making, and how to move forward.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Wednesdays</b>  <b>January 27 and March 17</b>  <b>7:00–9:00 p.m.</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Donor Egg Discussion Group</b></p> <p>Are you considering donor egg as a way to build a family? Join us for an open discussion of the issues, decisions, and emotions surrounding this family building option.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Monday</b>  <b>January 11, February 22, and March 8</b>  <b>7:00–9:00 p.m.</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Donor Egg Parents' Discussion Group</b></p> <p>Are you parenting a child(ren) through egg donation or are you pregnant through egg donation? Join a peer-led donor egg parenting group that will meet at the group leaders' homes. Meet other donor egg parents in a supportive environment for socializing and discussion of relevant issues. Please bring your children. Light snack provided.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sunday, January 24, 3 p.m. in Arlington, MA</b>  <i>Please email or call our office if you plan to attend, and we will send you the meeting address.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Secondary Infertility Discussion Group</b></p> <p>Coping with infertility while parenting? The struggles and frustrations of secondary infertility are unique. Join others who understand the challenges.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tuesdays</b>  <b>January 26 and February 23</b>  <b>7:00–8:30 p.m.</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Adoption Discussion Group</b></p> <p>Join us for an open discussion led by an adoptive mom. Bring your questions, concerns, and ideas to be shared with others who are exploring adoption or are in the process of adopting. Find some answers and strategies and connect with others.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Thursdays</b>  <b>January 28 and March 18</b>  <b>7:00–9:00 p.m.</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NEW! Pregnancy After Infertility Discussion Group</b></p> <p>This group is for women and men who are experiencing apprehension as well as joy about being pregnant after infertility.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mondays</b>  <b>January 25, February 22, and March 29</b>  <b>7:00–8:30 p.m.</b></p>
	<h2 style="text-align: center;">CONNECTICUT – PEER DISCUSSION GROUP – GENERAL INFERTILITY</h2> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Farmington Area</b>  <b>held on the 3rd Thursday of every month</b>          University of Connecticut Health Center / Dowling South Building, 2nd Floor 'Education' Room          263 Farmington Avenue, Farmington, CT  <b>Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.</b>  <b>January 21, February 18, and March 18</b></p>

## *Coping with Infertility — continued from page 1*

partners have been together, the frequency of sexual encounters tends to lessen. In addition, the longer a couple pursues infertility treatment, the greater chance sexual relations might suffer. To keep sexual intimacy and even passion alive in a relationship, concentrated time, effort and energy from both parties is often required.

Trying to take care of yourselves and your relationship both emotionally and physically can help abate emotional damage done by the infertility process that can be exhausting, draining and put undue strain on any intimate relationship. Therefore, it might be beneficial at some point in your infertility journey to seek professional assistance from a counselor or therapist. A therapist might be able to help both of you vent your anger and frustration caused by infertility. At the same time, he or she can help you to explore your former and current sexual relationship and work towards helping it regain its former vitality and importance in your lives. This reconnection with your partner on an intimate level is very crucial, regardless of the outcome of infertility treatment.

As mentioned earlier, infertility can create havoc down to the very core of even the strongest of relationships. And certainly, sexual intimacy is one aspect of a marriage or a relationship that can become deeply stressed and even devastated

by infertility. But all is not lost. With open and honest caring and understanding for each other, and a commitment to ongoing communication and respectful problem solving, who knows, your relationship might come out even stronger and more solid. Don't let a temporary or perhaps lengthier sexual glitch during your struggles with infertility have a negative, long-lasting influence. You both deserve better and for each other to be happy and satisfied in the various aspects of your relationship—you can do it!

*About the Author:* Jana Frances-Fischer, Ph.D. is licensed psychologist who works at University Counseling Services-Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA. Soon Dr. Frances-Fischer will pursue private practice with interests in the areas of infertility and other reproductive trauma, adoption, third party reproduction, sexuality, spirituality, mind-body wellness, and parenting. She has written numerous articles, a book chapter on infertility in *The 2007 Complete Women's Psychotherapy Treatment Planner*, and has presented papers at both national and international conferences on various aspects of the psychology of the reproductive process both to professionals and to the general public. E-mail Jfranfis@aol.com

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- ◆ **Women's Secondary Infertility Group**
- ◆ **Donor Egg Group**
- ◆ **Couples' Primary Infertility Group**

RESOLVE membership required. You can print out, complete, and mail or fax us the support group application on our website.

CT members interested in a future professionally led support group should call 860-523-8337 or email [info@resolveofgreaterhartford.org](mailto:info@resolveofgreaterhartford.org)

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## News from ASRM (American Society for Reproductive Medicine): Accelerated Fertility Treatment Leads to Shortened Time to Pregnancy and Charge Savings

For couples beginning infertility treatments, an accelerated path to IVF omitting the gonadotropin-stimulated artificial insemination cycles that conventionally precede assisted reproductive technology results in a shorter time to pregnancy. The accelerated treatment program also results in lower average charges per delivery.

Couples with unexplained infertility seeking treatment at Boston IVF or Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates were screened for eligibility to participate in the randomized, controlled trial. Eligibility criteria included: trying to conceive for 12 months without prior fertility treatment (excepting up to three cycles of clomiphene without intrauterine insemination (IUI)); a female partner 21 to 39 years old with sufficient ovarian reserve and without pelvic pathology; and adequate sperm concentration in the male partner.

Couples enrolled in the study followed either a conventional course of treatment or an accelerated course until they achieved pregnancy or elected to stop treatment. The conventional treatment included three IUI cycles stimulated with clomiphene citrate for ovulation induction, followed by three FSH-stimulated IUI cycles, then up to six cycles of IVF. The accelerated treatment plan omitted the FSH-stimulated cycles and went to IVF after three clomiphene-stimulated IUIs. The couples were followed from the date of their enrollment until the closing date of the study. Charge data obtained from insurers included all healthcare items and services for women during the trial—from the time of randomization through hospital discharge of mother and baby after delivery, or until one year after completing treatment without pregnancy.

Of 503 couples enrolled, 64% delivered at least one baby by the end of the study. Babies were born to 150/247 couples in the conventional treatment group and to 171/256 couples in accelerated treatment. The time to pregnancy was significantly shortened for the couples in the accelerated arm of the study. Those couples achieved pregnancy in an average of eight months compared with an average time to pregnancy of 11 months for couples in the conventional arm.

Insurance charge data were collected for 448 participating couples. Average charges per delivery were \$9,800 lower in the accelerated arm than for conventional treatment. Savings of \$2,624 per couple were observed in the accelerated treatment arm.

Foregoing gonadotropin-stimulated IUI eliminated not only the charges for that treatment from overall charges, but also reduced the risk of multiple conception and the increased charges associated with multiple pregnancies and births.

Elizabeth Ginsburg, President of the Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology, commented, “This is a very important study that will likely influence physicians to reduce the number of stimulated inseminations for patients with unexplained infertility. Adoption of such an accelerated course of treatment could result in many patients conceiving in less time with less expense.”

*Reindollar et al, A randomized clinical trial to evaluate optimal treatment for unexplained infertility: the fast track and standard treatment (FASTT) trial, Fertility and Sterility.*

The American Society for Reproductive Medicine, founded in 1944, is an organization of more than 8,000 physicians, researchers, nurses, technicians and other professionals dedicated to advancing knowledge and expertise in reproductive biology.

### Massachusetts Insurance Call-In Hours

Call **781-890-2225** on the date indicated to get your questions answered live.

**Insurance Call-in on Tuesday, January 19, 2010**

Having difficulty getting insurance coverage for your doctor’s recommended treatment plan? Need help framing an appeal letter to your insurance company? Want to know what the Massachusetts mandate covers? Call for consultation with our Insurance Advocate.

**Fees:** FREE to RESOLVE members, or join RESOLVE over the phone with your credit card.

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## "When You Grow Up and Adopt Your Kids..."

By "moc"

Tacit reminders of infertility have many facets. Am just off the phone with my friend who I know only because of our mutual infertility. I call her my compatriot because she understands the serendipity of infertility reminders. Today brought two unexpected ones: my friend's phone call and an innocuous trip to my mailbox.

My friend was upset because her mother dismissed her as selfish when she did not feel up to visiting her sister-in-law, who complains about how hard it is to care for her baby.

Sigh; isn't it painful when our moms miss the mark with their mothering?

We count on them to nurture us; to feel our ache; to be our greatest refuge in the world, to provide the unconditional love that predates the love of our spouses.

I told her I was sorry her mother was so drippy today and that her sister-in-law wears her baby as a badge. "Oh look at me, I'm so overworked; I have a baby to take care of . . ."

The infertile woman is told to suck it up, that infertility is nature's way or God's will; that we're not the first infertile women and we won't be the last; that it's not a life and death issue. The subtext of all these things is, "Worry about something more important."

It is, in a way, a life and death matter; it is the death of knowing a piece of us will remain in the world after we're gone; it's the death of the dream, established deep in our childhood, that our children will inherit our genes and display them as we watch them grow. My golly, we've all heard countless times, "Wait til you grow up and have your own kids"; but the comment is always, "When you have your own kids." Not once did my parents say to me, "When you grow up and adopt your kids, then you'll understand . . ."

No offense was intended by my parents when they'd say, "have" instead of "adopt." It's the subtlety that gets me; that having my own children was taught to me as my birthright (ambiguity and pun intended on using birthright . . .).

It's the death of discovering surprises in your offspring; if an artist is born to you and you are not, you trace the family tree for the latent talent.

It's the death of taking out the family photo album, of digging up the old Brownie and Kodak photos of generations gone by and saying, "This is your grandmother" or "This is where your great-grandfather was born . . ."

It is the death of many things.

And yes, life goes on and yes, it's still beautiful. But I am allowed to have my sad days. I have earned them.

To those who say that there are worse health issues than infertility, I completely agree. Then, without malice or insult, I add one of my favorite sayings: "My splinter hurts me more than your broken arm hurts me," and I let them chew on that for a while.

After the call, I went for the mail and found a flier from a neighbor who lives on the street parallel to mine. When I drive on that street I never considered the people who lived there to be my neighbors. But the person was trying to garner business for her child-care facility. She was sponsoring "a neighborhood teddy bear summer ice cream social." The only requirement was to "bring your favorite teddy bear to hug at the party."

I appreciated this unknown neighbor's attempt at community building, so I called. I applauded her efforts, especially when compared to my complete lack of initiative to know my adjacent neighbors, much less the parallel ones on the opposite street.

"Oh, thank you for calling!" she exclaimed, so obviously excited that I assumed I must have been among the first to RSVP.

"But I cannot attend," I said. In truth, I was attending a seminar to help me accept the reality that I would not have biological children . . . and to accept it without losing my hair (due to pulling it out during duress) or causing my husband to lose his hair (since he lives with me when I'm pulling out mine).

"Sorry you can't come," she said, to which she swiftly added, "Do you have kids?"

Oh dear, the fertile woman had forgotten to add the major requirement in the flier — a child! One needs to bring more than a beloved teddy bear. How would I look, meeting my neighbors, clutching my teddy bear with both hands, since I have no small child to clutch my other hand? I could bring my dog, since he's subbing as my child right now.

Pang; my faceless neighbor touched multiple nerves with her innocent remark. She reminded me that I am still defined and integrated based on my fecundity.

All this from a Xeroxed invitation, from a woman who wants to make extra money in her home by watching my child as she watches her own.

All in a day's infertility. I think, maybe, that would be a good title of a book about coping with this insidious, invisible disease . . . though I might change "days" to "daze."

*continued on page 13*

### The RESOLVE Fertility Treatment, Donor Choices, and Adoption Conference: 2009 Wrap-Up and Thank You

By Rebecca Lubens, Executive Director

On November 7th over 200 attendees turned out early on a Saturday to gather information and get their questions answered, in a comfortable and compassionate environment.

As in past years, we offered 40 workshops on topics of perennial interest, as well as new sessions on recurrent pregnancy loss, donor sperm issues and concerns, and working with birthparents, among others. Also for the first time, the end of the day featured new “Ask the Experts” Q&A sessions, which were informal forums for asking questions to clarify or gain additional information on a topic covered at the conference. Our 30 exhibitors actively shared their services, information, and products with attendees as well, and provided much-needed financial support for our event.

I want to express my deepest thanks to all those who helped make this important event possible: to our presenters, for their enthusiastic willingness to offer their time and share their expertise — with special thanks to Alice D. Domar, PhD, for sharing her wisdom and compassion in an inspiring keynote address; to our exhibitors and supporters for their continued backing for the work of RESOLVE of the Bay State — with special thanks to Conference Sponsor EMD Serono, Inc. and Breakfast Sponsor New England Cryogenic Center, Inc.; to the many volunteers who generously offered their time for conference tasks large and small — with a very special thanks to the Adoption Committee that planned the entire Adoption track of the conference — for all of their hard work, and last but not least, to our talented and dedicated staff, especially Lisa Rothstein, our Programming Coordinator, and Tamar Wallace, Office Coordinator. We couldn't have done it without the commitment and enthusiasm of all of you!

Don't forget to save the date for next year's conference: **Saturday, November 6, 2010.**

### Conference 2009 Sponsors

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**Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates,  
Center for Fertility**  
*Boston, MA*

**Massachusetts General Hospital Fertility Center**  
*Boston, MA*

**Prospective Families**  
*Wellesley, MA*

**Schering-Plough**  
*Roseland, NJ*

## 2009 ADVOCACY AWARD RECOGNIZES DR. SAMUEL PANG

Advocacy — that is, making sure that public policies are fair toward people with infertility — is something we at RESOLVE of the Bay State take very seriously. This year, we are pleased to recognize a doctor who has stood out for his advocacy on behalf of infertility patients in Massachusetts. This doctor has been singularly committed to improving the insurance coverage for infertility under Massachusetts laws. He advised RESOLVE of the Bay State on the problems under current laws and helped draft corrective wording, which is now Senate Bill 485; he met with legislators who are considering the Bill; this doctor even recruited patients who were eager to add their voices and testify in favor of S. 485. For his dedication to fairness for infertility patients in public policy, RESOLVE of the Bay State is very pleased to honor Dr. Samuel Pang, Medical Director of Reproductive Science Center with our 2009 Award for Advocacy.



*Dr. Samuel Pang, Rebecca Lubens,  
and Lee Collins*

## Exhibitors

**Act of Love Adoptions/MSPCC**  
Boston, MA

**Adoption Associates**  
Newton Highlands, MA

**Adoption Community of New England, Inc.**  
Westborough, MA

**Adoption Resources**  
Waltham, MA

**altTHERA**  
Boston, MA

**Angel Adoptions**  
Waltham, MA

**Brigham and Women's Hospital, Center for Infertility and Reproductive Surgery**  
Boston, MA

**Center for Surrogacy and Egg Donation, Inc.**  
Southborough, MA

**Children's Home Society & Family Services**  
St. Paul, MN

**China Adoption with Love**  
Brookline, MA

**Family Acupuncture & Herbs of Reading**  
Wakefield, MA

**Freedom Fertility Pharmacy**  
Byfield, MA

**Holden Acupuncture & Coastal Acupuncture**  
Holden, MA

**MAPS Worldwide**  
Boston, MA

**Reproductive Science Center**  
Lexington, MA

**Sea Changes Life Coaching**  
Cape Elizabeth, ME

**Tiny Treasures, LLC**  
Burlington, MA

**Village Fertility Pharmacy**  
Waltham, MA

**Women & Infants' Hospital of RI, Center for Reproduction and Infertility**  
Providence, RI

## Presenters

**Eleanor Allen, JD, LICSW**  
Bright Futures Adoption Center

**Marla Allisan, JD, LICSW**  
A Full Circle Adoptions

**Rachel Ashby, MD**  
Brigham & Women's Hospital

**Steven Bayer, MD**  
Boston IVF

**Merle Bombardieri, LICSW**  
Wellspring Counseling Center, author

**Pat Brady, LICSW**  
Act of Love Adoptions/MSPCC

**Vito R.S. Cardone, MD**  
Cardone Reproductive Medicine & Infertility, LLC

**Joan Lefler Clark, MEd**  
Adoptions Explained, LLC

**Susan Crockin, JD**  
Crockin Law & Policy Group

**Donna Daley**  
Prospective Families

**Jill Davidson, MSW**  
Children's Home Society & Family Services

**Kathleen DeLisle, Esq**  
Nichols and DeLisle, P.C.

**Nancy Docktor, RN CS**  
Fertility Centers of New England, Private Practice

**Anne Korpi-Dolan, LICSW, DCSW**  
Private Practice

**Alice D. Domar, PhD**  
Domar Center for Mind/Body Health

**Dale Eldridge, LICSW, BCD**  
Adoption Choices

**Natalie Engler, RYT**  
Domar Center for Mind/Body Health

**Susan Fischer, RN**  
Brigham & Women's Hospital

**Janet Fronk, CNS**  
Mind Body Medical Associates

**Carol Frost, LICSW**  
Private Practice, author

**Andrew Geller, PhD**  
Private Practice, Consultant to RESOLVE of the Bay State

**Dinah Gilburd, MA, MSW, LICSW**  
MGH Charlestown Healthcare Center and Private Practice

**Ellen Glazer, LICSW**  
Private Practice, author

**Joseph A. Hill, III, MD**  
Fertility Centers of New England

**Betsy Hochberg, LICSW**  
Adoption Resources

**Grace Lee, MD**  
Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates

**Kristen Magnacca**  
Author and Infertility Coach

**Donna Martin**  
Reproductive Science Center

**Barbara Morse, PhD**  
The Fetal Alcohol Education Program

**Mary Murphy**  
MSPCC's/Act of Love Adoptions

**Lynn Nichols, LICSW**  
Boston IVF

**Robert Nichols, Esq**  
Center for Surrogacy and Egg Donation, Inc.

**Leah O'Leary**  
A Red Thread Adoption Service, Inc

**Debra Olshever, LCSW, LMHC, MEd**  
Adoption Associates

**Selwyn Oskowitz, MD**  
Boston IVF

**Samuel Pang, MD**  
Reproductive Science Center

**John Petrozza, MD**  
MGH Fertility Center

**Catherine Racowsky, PhD, HCLD**  
Brigham & Women's Hospital

**Julie Richardson**  
Tiny Treasures, LLC

**Jared Robins, MD**  
Women & Infants Hospital of RI

**Nancy Rosenhaus, LICSW**  
Adoptions With Love

**Ava Sarafan, LICSW**  
MAPS

**Lynette Scott, PhD**  
Fertility Centers of New England

**David Schmidt, MD**  
Center For Advanced Reproductive Services, UConn

**Deb Shrier, MSW, LICSW**  
Wide Horizons for Children

**Holly Simons, PhD, LICSW**  
Private Practice, author

**Cynthia Sites, MD**  
Baystate Reproductive Medicine

**Emily Spurrell, PhD**  
Women & Infants Hospital of RI

**Lyn Swirda, Lic. Ac, MAc, DiploAc**  
Center for Complementary Medicine

**Anne White**  
Jewish Family Service of the North Shore

## Volunteer of the Year Award



The Board of Directors of RESOLVE of the Bay State was very pleased to award Davina Fankhauser with the 2009 Volunteer of the Year Award at a recent ceremony. Davina was cited for her incredible work as Vice President of the Board and Chair of our very active Advocacy Committee. In particular, Board Chair Beth Panella

praised her contributions in the following areas:

- Worked closely with legislators, their aides, patients, and doctors to craft the language for the updated Massachusetts Infertility Mandate.
- Scheduled and conducted many meetings with legislators and their aides to explain and advocate for our point of view.
- Did research to support the bill, monitored its progress, and publicized its importance to the RESOLVE community.
- Testified personally at the State House multiple times.
- Provided significant support for infertility patients in Maine to get a Mandate considered there.
- Ensuring that advocacy plays a key part in the overall work we do on behalf of the infertile population.

Bravo, Davina, and deepest thanks for the incredible time, effort, and passion that you put into everything you do for RESOLVE!



## Volunteers Needed!

Volunteers are the heart of RESOLVE of the Bay State. We could not provide the comprehensive programs and services we do without the help of our many committed volunteers! Here are a few current opportunities, but there are many others available.

- Join the Advocacy Committee and help Davina protect and improve the infertility coverage mandate in Massachusetts, and gain coverage in other New England States.
- Host an evening or Saturday educational program. Welcome and check in attendees, introduce the speaker, collect evaluations. And of course, attend the program for free! First timers are paired with an experienced host.
- Help with fundraising. Organize a fun Spa Night, auction, or other fundraising event. Write fundraising letters to your friends and family. Call our members at our Spring Phonathon.
- Come into our Waltham office during the day, Monday through Thursday, and help put together the frequent mailings we send out.

For more information about these and other volunteer opportunities, contact us at [admin@resolveofthebaystate.org](mailto:admin@resolveofthebaystate.org) or call our HelpLine and leave a message, 781-890-2225.

## What can we do to help build your family? Everything possible.

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## Preparing for Success: Alternative Fertility Treatments for Advanced Maternal Age

By Jose Ruiz, Lic. Ac., MAOM, Dipl. OM, Family Acupuncture & Herbs of Reading

Women struggling with infertility who find themselves of “advanced maternal age” often wonder whether acupuncture might be helpful to them. Acupuncture may be effective for women trying to conceive in a number of ways, especially in improving blood flow to the reproductive organs and correcting underlying imbalances that could be distracting the body from its reproductive activities. Here is an example of how Chinese medicine was able to help one particular patient.

### An Example of Success: Reducing Elevated FSH Levels

In this case, a 39 year-old woman sought treatment after being diagnosed with primary ovarian insufficiency (also known as premature ovarian failure). She had an FSH level of 35 and was told by her reproductive endocrinologist that her only option for achieving pregnancy would be through donor egg.

The patient wondered if her elevated FSH levels could be reduced through Chinese medicine. In the Chinese medicinal approach, the practitioner does not specifically treat FSH levels, but rather focuses on treating imbalances in the body. The body takes care of the rest, which may lead to an FSH reduction.

After an initial evaluation, the patient was discovered to have three major issues. (1) She was only having one to two bowel movements per week and extreme bloating (to the point where

she had no appetite). (2) She had severely painful periods. (3) She had tremendous anxiety. She was an accountant who was going through her assisted reproductive therapy (ART) testing during tax season, so you can just imagine the stress she was experiencing at that time.

The recommendation was that she should have acupuncture and herbal treatments once a week for 3 months and then have her FSH levels rechecked. She was also advised to manage her anxiety through meditational CDs with guided imagery specific to infertility. After two weeks of treatment, the patient got her period and had almost no pain. Also within that time, her bowel movements increased to one to two times a day and her bloating resolved.

After six weeks of treatment, the patient had done four home pregnancy tests—all of which were positive. She wondered, “How is this possible?”

### A Different Approach: Making the Impossible Possible by Correcting Imbalances

Advanced maternal age patients need to allow some time for their bodies to prepare before entering their next in vitro fertilization (IVF) or intrauterine insemination (IUI) cycle. What is vital to understand is that 90 to 100 days before ovulation occurs, follicles enter a major growth phase. This three-month period is critically important for Chinese medicine because the environment that the egg is bathed in during this time will affect the quality of the egg at ovulation.

Therefore, it is recommended that patients receive a minimum of three months of weekly acupuncture and herbal treatments and follow comprehensive lifestyle improvement strategies. During this time, the focus is on regulating imbalances that may be occurring elsewhere in the body, which is a different approach from Western medicine.

What this means is that, while underlying issues like anxiety or irritable bowel syndrome might not be of primary concern to a reproductive endocrinologist, they are vitally important to a Chinese medicine practitioner. Simply put, imbalances—which might be digestive, menstrual, emotional, or dietary—need to be corrected to maximize a person’s fertility potential.

Of course, every patient responds differently, and no practitioner can guarantee results. What we do offer is an alternative and complementary approach to addressing infertility that might be just the sort of change of pace advanced maternal age patients need for enhancing outcomes.

*About the Author:* Jose Ruiz is a licensed acupuncturist who specializes in treating infertility through acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine. He practices at Family Acupuncture & Herbs of Reading located in Wakefield, MA. For more information about his services, please contact (781) 944-5443 or visit [www.readingacupuncture.com](http://www.readingacupuncture.com).

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ADOPTION



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Providing options, supporting choices.

# "WHEN YOU GROW UP AND ADOPT YOUR KIDS" — CONTINUED

Continued from page 8

I now accept that my children will be adopted and truly realize the blessing adoption is.

When it comes to coping, however, I have two needs: fertilize my hope and nurture my hurts. I devour every feel-good-think-positive article on adoption I see. But I need to reaffirm my sadness also, to reassure myself that I am not, as my friend's mother said, selfish to feel this way. Affirmation, as with infertility reminders, comes in all forms.



**Amy Demma, JD**  
Founder

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**Nutritional Counseling**  
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\*Paulus and colleagues, Fertility and Sterility, 2002 \*\*Domar and colleagues, Fertility and Sterility, 2000

Call **781.434.6578** for more information or to make an appointment



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## NON-RESOLVE PROGRAMS

The following programs may be of interest to RESOLVE members. A listing does not constitute an endorsement by RESOLVE. See page 15 for advertising and editorial policies. Deadline for Spring 2010: February 26, 2010.

### **DOMAR CENTER FOR MIND/BODY HEALTH MIND/BODY PROGRAMS FOR FERTILITY**

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To learn more or to register, contact

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**Phone:** 781-890-2225  
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## ADVERTISING POLICY

This Newsletter accepts paid advertisements. Advertisements submitted must be emailed as PDFs and must be approved by the Editor. Please call 781-890-2225 for rate and size information. We limit our paid advertisements and will accept them on a first-come, first-served basis. We also accept announcements of upcoming events for inclusion in the Non-RESOLVE Programs section, and Requests for Contact ads from those conducting research studies.

The service providers advertising in this newsletter have not been screened or required to meet any specific criteria and have paid a fee to be included. Therefore advertisements for services/persons/providers should not in any way be considered endorsements or recommendations, either express or implied, by RESOLVE of the Bay State or RESOLVE of Greater Hartford.

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## NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Spring 2010	February 26, 2010
Summer 2010	May 28, 2010

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*Please contact your local chapter if you are interested in becoming a volunteer.*

## EDITORIAL POLICY

This newsletter is primarily a vehicle for local news, events, and articles of interest. Members are encouraged to submit comments and articles. The editor reserves the right to edit all submissions.

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