

**BOURN HALL ANNOUNCES ITS BEST EVER TAKE-HOME-BABY RATES
AND A RENEWED FOCUS ON FERTILITY RESEARCH
Local MP and shadow health minister Andrew Lansley
visits to see developments**

The management team of Bourn Hall Limited announce today that ownership of Bourn Hall Clinic - the world's first in-vitro fertilisation clinic – and LCG Bioscience - a contract Clinical Research company, has transferred from its parent company, Serono, to the existing management team through an amicable, multi-million pound management buyout (MBO). This offers the committed team the chance to progress exciting new opportunities to improve take-home-baby-rates that are emerging from both the medical and research strands of their work.

The latest figures from Bourn Hall Clinic show that an advance in the IVF technique known as Blastocyst Culture is achieving a take-home-baby rate of 48%, much higher than the national average for ordinary IVF of 27.6% for women under 35*. (HFEA figures)

Announcement of the MBO and the latest results was made to coincide with a visit by Rt Hon Andrew Lansley, MP to see the new Biomarker Research Laboratories at Bourn Hall, Bourn, Cambridge.

Mike Macnamee, Chief Executive of Bourn Hall Limited, is part of the five strong management team all of whom have been at the clinic for more than 10 years. He said:

“Bourn Hall Ltd is unique as it combines both a clinic and a research company. The founders made the first great breakthrough in IVF and the management team see considerable scope for continuing this tradition.

“Much of our work in both the clinic and research is directed at three areas: understanding the factors that influence implantation of the fertilised egg within the womb; ensuring that embryos with the best chance of success are selected and thirdly preparing the patient to support a healthy pregnancy.

Bourn Hall Clinic has above national average live birth rates. Its latest results from April to October 2005 show an average calculated live birth rate of 33% for standard IVF unadjusted for age, the national figure is 25-28%. This figure is further improved to 48% with Blastocyst Culture, which is a technique used where there has been recurrent failure for the fertilised egg to implant in the womb; a common cause of infertility.

More follows...

Bourn Hall Clinical Pregnancy rates

Treatment	Standard IVF	IVF with ICSI	IVF with Blastocyst
Number of Patients	140	137	49
Clinical Pregnancy Rate	38%	40%	60%
Calculated live birth rate	33%	36%	48%

- ◆ Results for April to October 2005 per egg collection.

It is only within the last 18 months that advances in laboratory technology have made it possible to apply Blastocyst culture with confidence routinely to patient treatment, and this is the first set of results following this wider application of the technique.

Mike Macnamee continues, "18.7% of infertility is unexplained and this is a cause of considerable distress. By improving our understanding of the relationship between the embryo and the uterus we can increase the probability of a successful pregnancy.

Research in our Biomarker Laboratories is an important future aspect of this work. The Laboratory searches for molecular indicators of biological activity used to increase the efficacy of drugs. In this context the application of these techniques enable the 'dialogue' between the embryo and the uterus to be understood, allowing comparison of the protein fingerprint of embryos that implant with those that fail. The new laboratory provides a facility for research into this and other important areas of unmet medical need."

Mr Peter Brinsden, Medical Director at Bourn Hall Clinic, sees the MBO as an opportunity for the centre to build on its pioneering research in embryo development and implantation and make these developments more accessible. He said:

"Improving implantation rates is the next big challenge for everyone involved in assisted conception and Bourn Hall is in a unique position to take a lead in making the benefits of this research accessible to patients.

"In the clinic we have observed that techniques such as hysteroscopy – where the lining of the uterus is inspected with a telescope – can be used to identify how the health of the womb can be improved before IVF treatment; reducing the possible causes of failure and increasing the chance of pregnancy. Until now it has typically been used after several unsuccessful attempts. Our work suggests that used before treatment in tandem with ultrasound it could help reduce the number of cycles needed to achieve pregnancy."

"Further research into techniques, such as this, would not only improve success rates but also reduce the cost of fertility treatment making it more widely accessible."

Rt Hon Andrew Lansley MP said: "I am delighted to welcome in a new era at Bourn Hall and wish the management and staff every success. The results announced today are extremely promising and will bring renewed hope to many would-be parents."

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Editors' notes

Blastocyst Culture

Blastocyst Culture and transfer is a technique developed for in vitro fertilization (IVF) that maximises pregnancy rates while minimising the risk of multiple pregnancies. Embryos are grown in a culture medium for five days until they reach the blastocyst stage, which has a higher chance of successful implantation when returned to the woman.

Not all the eggs retrieved from a woman will fertilise, and of these not all will survive much beyond day 2 or 3, when traditionally embryos are selected for transfer. By growing the embryos to 5 days it is possible to select with greater certainty the embryos with the greatest chance of success and to replace just one or two of these.

Blastocysts may also have a higher rate of success because they have thinner 'shells' so can 'hatch' more easily and the uterine lining is more receptive to advanced embryos.

Keeping embryo in culture for 5 days is technically challenging and is used in cases where there has been persistent failure to implant.

The Management Buy-out

Cambridge, UK: 20th January 2006. Bourn Hall Limited announced today that ownership of Bourn Hall Clinic and LCG Bioscience has transferred from its parent company, Serono, to the existing management team through an amicable management buyout (MBO) in a multi million pound deal.

All Bourn Hall Ltd contractual agreements remain unaffected as a result of this MBO and this includes continuity of service for employees.

Bourn Hall Limited, Bourn, Cambridge, trades as 'Bourn Hall Clinic', the world's first in-vitro fertilisation clinic, and as 'LCG Bioscience', offering clinical research and development services to the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industry.

Bourn Hall, the world's first test-tube baby clinic, will continue to provide assisted conception services to private patients and the NHS. Bourn Hall is dedicated to providing the highest quality of fertility treatment and is committed to continuing its pioneering research in embryo development, implantation and embryonic stem cell lines.

LCG Bioscience provides exploratory early phase human clinical development services for the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries. Working for a wide cross-section of organisations, over 80% of its revenue is generated from repeat business. Serono will continue to use LCG as a preferred supplier for its early stage clinical research. LCG is also a preferred to supplier to three of the top ten blue-chip pharmaceutical companies and has confirmed orders in excess of £12 million over the next three years.

The deal enables the dedicated management team, all of whom have held senior positions at the organisation for over 10 years, to shape the future growth and development of this internationally renowned company. Led by Mike Macnamee, BSc, MSc, PhD, Chief Executive, the management team comprises Simon Barton ACMA, Finance Director; Nicola Graver FCIPD, Human Resources Director, Lisa Gibbons RGN, Clinical Research Director and Dawn Wilkerson IT and Core Services Director.

The MBO deal – which took just 6 weeks from outline agreement to completion – was financed by the Bourn Hall Management team and Barclays Bank, with the support of PEM Corporate Finance LLP and Mills & Reeve.

***HFEA Facts and Figures treatment and success**

<http://www.hfea.gov.uk/PressOffice/Factsandfigures>

The average success rate for IVF treatment using fresh eggs in the UK per cycle started (HFEA Guide to Infertility 2005/06 – national average for 1 April 2002-31 March 2003)

- * 27.6% (for women under 35);
- * 22.3% (for women aged 35-37)
- * 18.3% (for women aged 38-39)
- * 10.0% (for women aged 40-42)