

## Rush to Spain for IVF is up 100pc

By [Claire Murphy](#)

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The number of Irish couples travelling to Spain for IVF treatment has more than doubled within the space of two years.

Doctors at Instituto Marques in Barcelona are seeing an increase in the amount of couples travelling to the city because there are no services for anonymous donation in Ireland.

Women who have put off having a family for too long, or those who have problems conceiving, are turning to European countries where they can obtain donor eggs to create an embryo.

Dr Raul Olivares from the specialised clinic said in 2007, 50 Irish couples made the trip to Barcelona. Last year, doctors saw 70 couples, whereas this year 100 couples have already been treated at the clinic.

"The main reason couples are coming to the clinic is that we don't have a waiting list," Dr Olivares explained. "Spain is also the leading country for donation, it's part of our cultural background. Donation is anonymous. In Ireland there is no regulation with regards to egg donation."

He told the Herald that northern European couples tend to want to know everything about the egg, whereas Spanish and Italians don't. And he said Irish couples also prefer to maintain anonymity.

But the procedure is costly and can reach up to €12,000 with the added cost of travel.

The doctor, who appeared on TV3's The Morning Show, said women travel to the city to obtain the fresh transfers, which he says have more of a chance of success than frozen transfers.

Same-sex couples and single women are also accepted to the clinic, which has proven popular with couples across Europe. After two years of trying Esther and Josef Garcia from Madrid decided to turn to the clinic.

"When I was 33 years old and we were looking to conceive, I went to Dr Olivares. He told me that this ovary was sleeping but the doctor pushed me to try a new treatment. I wasn't quite sure, but we tried it and this time it worked."

Out of eight embryos, only two were suitable for implant, she said. The couple have two healthy children, Rodger (3) and six-month-old Elia.

"I can completely understand Irish people who want to travel here," she said. "I know it costs a lot of money but I never thought about this. It should be the last thing you think about."

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