



## Assisted Conception Taskforce (ACT) Media Backgrounder

### The need for ACT

- At least 10-15% of couples worldwide are unable to achieve a pregnancy naturally and suffer from primary infertility (a term used to describe a couple that has been unable to conceive after a minimum of one year of attempting to do so through unprotected sexual intercourse).<sup>i</sup>
- In 2002 the WHO estimated this number to be in excess of 80 million.<sup>ii</sup> However, a study conducted last year identified that this number had increased significantly to around 90 million.<sup>i</sup> Of that number, only a small proportion of couples (6%) actually receive the medical help they may require.<sup>i</sup>

### The role of ACT

- The extent of the problem, further highlighted by the recent research, prompted the formation of the **Assisted Conception Taskforce (ACT)**, a unique group of patient leaders and infertility specialists to provide a public voice to promote awareness and education of difficulties in conceiving.
- ACT currently comprises 39 members from 17 countries across the world, including the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Spain, Japan, Switzerland, Italy and Australia.
- ACT aims to develop education and support programs to ensure that people who have difficulty conceiving, their families and the medical community have a full understanding of the difficulties faced, how best to overcome them, and the benefits assisted conception treatments can bring.

### The goals of ACT:

- Address the issues surrounding difficulties in conceiving and assisted conception.
  - o ACT is made up of patient leaders and expert physicians who know first-hand how difficult the journey through assisted conception can seem but, more importantly, are aware of the happiness that assisted conception can bring.
- Dispel myths and misconceptions about the treatment processes involved.
  - o A recent survey showed that many couples may never seek treatment owing to feelings that treatments available are unnatural or that they do not want to be labeled as 'infertile'.<sup>iii</sup> This is an inappropriate description



for people who have difficulty conceiving, which may contribute to reluctance in seeking medical help.

- Provide clear advice and information about assisted conception.
  - o The same survey also revealed that some couples believe there are few treatment options available to them. In providing education, ACT will help people with difficulty conceiving to realize that there are many options open to them and the reality is that assisted conception has an excellent success rate, which can be likened to that of conventional conception.
- Increase awareness of the range of therapeutic approaches and support available for people who have difficulty conceiving.
  - o The Assisted Conception Taskforce will fight to make sure that difficulties in conceiving are recognized globally and that each couple that requires treatment will have access to advice and information about the various treatment pathways available to them.

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**References:**

- <sup>i</sup> Professor John Collins, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario. Global Epidemiological Fertility Model, 2004.
- <sup>ii</sup> <http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/infertility/index.htm>
- <sup>iii</sup> 'Barriers to Assisted Conception Treatment' – Lightspeed Research, June 2004.