



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
SINGAPORE

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Licensees / Managers of Licensed Hospitals and Medical Clinics Providing Assisted
Reproduction Services

GUIDELINES ON THE IMPORTATION OF GAMETES / EMBRYOS DURING COVID-19 TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

The Ministry of Health (MOH) recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the AR treatments for some couples, and we have seen an increase in the number of enquiries regarding the importation of gametes/embryos from members of public (MOPs) and assisted reproduction (AR) practitioners.

2. To enable the appeals to be reviewed expediently, and in view of the current travel restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry hereby issue the Guidelines on the Importation of Gametes / Embryos at Annex A ("Guidelines") outlining the appeal requirements that the AR centres are required to adhere to for their appeals to be reviewed. The Guidelines will take immediate effect from the date of this circular.
3. The Ministry will review the duration and conditions set out in Annex A depending on the prevailing COVID-19 travel restrictions, and will inform AR centres of any changes accordingly.
4. Please contact MOH via email at eLIS@moh.gov.sg if you have any queries on this circular.

Thank you.

A/PROF KENNETH MAK
DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL SERVICES
MINISTRY OF HEALTH



Ministry of Health, Singapore
College of Medicine Building
16 College Road
Singapore 169854
TEL (65) 6325 9220
FAX (65) 6224 1677
WEB www.moh.gov.sg

GUIDELINES ON THE IMPORTATION OF GAMETES/EMBRYOS DURING COVID-19 TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

For their patients' appeal to be reviewed, AR centres must meet **all the following conditions** and include **all the following information, unless otherwise specified**:

- (i) Appeals to MOH should be raised through the locally registered AR practitioner in a licensed AR centre treating the patient.
- (ii) The local AR centre must assess that it is appropriate and be willing to accept the imported gametes/embryos.
- (iii) The appeal to MOH should contain all the following information:
 - (a) Whether the husband's sperm was used in the creation of the embryo, and if so, whether the husband was agreeable to the import of the embryos;
 - (b) The name of the overseas clinic/bank the gametes/embryos are stored at;
 - (c) The number of gametes/embryos that the patient and/or her husband have stored in the overseas clinic/bank;
 - (d) The number of gametes/embryos that the patient and/or her husband intend to transfer to the local AR centre;
 - (e) A copy of the written informed consent from the couple in accordance with the AR LTCs 2020; and,
 - (f) Written agreement that the couple understand and accept all risks which may be associated with the transfer of gametes/embryos, and accept responsibility for the proper handling of the gametes/embryos while in transit, including responsibility for any adverse outcomes.

Use of Donor Gametes or Embryos

2. Where donor gametes/embryos are used in any way, all the following additional declarations are required:

- (i) The couple must provide a written declaration that they have paid no more than reasonable expenses¹ for such use. As commercial trading of human gametes/embryos is prohibited in Singapore, the couple will be required to produce evidence (e.g. an itemised invoice) to support their declaration.
- (ii) Written declaration by the overseas PGS lab and, where applicable, overseas AR clinic that the collection / retrieval of the gametes / embryos meet AR LTC 2020 paragraph 5.29².

¹ Under the Human Cloning and Other Prohibited Practices Act (HCOPPA), only reasonable expenses may be provided for the supply of gametes and embryos.

As per HCOPPA section 13, and MOH's Licensing Terms and Conditions for Assisted Reproduction Services paragraph 5.31, "reasonable expenses" can include expenses relating to the preparation, preservation and quality control of the gametes/embryos.

² In particular, if donor gamete / embryo is being used, please ensure that the following is observed:

5.29 AR Centres shall ensure that only:

- (a) oocytes donated by women between the ages of 21 and 35 at the point of oocyte removal;

- (iii) Documentation that the donor was screened for the following transmissible diseases:
- (a) Hepatitis B;
 - (b) Hepatitis C;
 - (c) Syphilis;
 - (d) Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) (and whether a second test was repeated no earlier than 6 months from the time of donation); and,
 - (e) Cytomegalovirus.
- (iv) Documentation on whether the donor's eggs have been used before, and if so, the number of live-births that the donor's eggs have resulted in.

Pre-implantation Genetic Screening (PGS)

3. Where PGS testing has been carried out, the following additional declarations and information are required:

- (i) The reason the patient and her husband sought pre-implantation genetic screening (PGS) testing overseas rather than in Singapore;
- (ii) A copy of the full PGS test report provided by the overseas clinic;
- (iii) Written declaration from the overseas PGS laboratory and, where applicable, the overseas AR clinic that besides the presence/absence of chromosomal aberrations, no other findings from the PGS tests (including gender of the embryos) were reported to the couple and their attending physician and embryologist overseas, and in Singapore;
- (iv) If gender has been revealed in the test results or via other communication channels (e.g. email or phone calls), the appellant should prove and declare that family balancing was not a consideration. The declaration will be corroborated with the attending physician; and,
- (v) If there is a medical need to disclose the gender result (e.g. mosaicism in the sex chromosomes), the appellant and attending physician are to declare and justify the medical need with documentation.

4. AR centres should file their appeal with MOH at <https://go.gov.sg/ivfimport> and are not to proceed with further treatment until further guidance from MOH.

(b) sperm donated by men between the ages of 21 and 40 at the point of sperm removal; and
(c) embryos created from oocytes removed from women between the ages of 21 and 35 at the point of oocyte removal,
are used in a patient for AR procedures.