

<http://somatosphere.net/2017/08/web-round-up-time-to-chill-egg-freezing-and-beyond.html>

Web Round Up: Time to Chill? Egg Freezing and Beyond

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By Moira Kyweluk

A focus on age-related fertility decline, and exploration of ways to expand the timeline and options for biological parenthood, have been consistent cultural and web-wide fixations. The \$3 billion United States fertility industry was in the headlines once again this month including coverage of the launch of [Future Family](#), a service offering a “[fertility age test](#)” to women and negotiated-rate infertility medical care, alongside newly published research on [ovarian tissue preservation](#), an alternative to oocyte cryopreservation or “egg freezing”, both procedures aimed at potentially extending a woman’s fertility window.

In the wake of findings presented in July 2017 at the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology conference in Geneva, Switzerland by [Marcia Inhorn](#), Professor of Anthropology and International Affairs at Yale University, popular media headlines blared: “[Why are women freezing their eggs? Because of the lack of eligible men](#)” and “[Women who freeze their eggs aren’t doing it for career reasons.](#)” The study analyzed interviews from 150 women in their late 30s and early 40s who opted for egg freezing in Israel and the United States. Results “[show that women were not intentionally postponing childbearing for educational or career reasons, as is often assumed in media coverage of this phenomenon, but rather preserving their remaining fertility because they did not have partners to create a family with. The researchers conclude that women see egg freezing as ‘a technological concession to the man deficit’, using it to ‘buy time’ while continuing their search for a suitable partner to father their children.](#)”

The American Society for Reproductive Medicine, the regulatory board that governs the safe and ethical use of fertility technologies, [reclassified egg-freezing technology from “experimental” to standard-of-care in 2012.](#)

This reclassification caused major structural readjustments within fertility medicine to welcome patients self-identifying as in need of egg freezing services. The rise of so-called “[social freezing.](#)” the elective decision by an otherwise healthy woman to freeze her eggs (in contrast to a woman with a preexisting medical threat to fertility), has increased public attention and scrutiny of the practice.

Major Silicon Valley tech companies, led by Apple and Facebook in 2014 and followed shortly thereafter by Google and Uber, [made headlines when each began offering up to \\$20,000 in egg-freezing health insurance benefits to female employees and covered female spouses](#). New statistics indicate [more than a dozen tech companies have followed these industry leaders](#) in extending benefits to employees. Supporters claim these procedures give women greater reproductive and family planning freedom, including potentially delaying childbearing. Pundits and ethicists have alternately constructed egg freezing as a “fringe perk” of working for such companies, akin to dry cleaning services and massages, or as a cultural concern, a worrying attempt to exploit female workers by encouraging delayed pregnancies within a work environment that does not support family-oriented policies that allow for parenthood.

Social egg freezers and women using all forms of reproductive technologies in the United States tend to be overwhelmingly white and middle to upper class. Queer women, women of color, women of limited financial means, and others are typically overlooked in both research and marketing of these technologies. [Reniqua Allen](#) writes, [“A lot of people are talking about egg freezing: It’s the latest perk for professional women at companies like Facebook and Apple; it’s being marketed as a welcome solution for millennial women who want more control over their reproductive lives. It’s moving more mainstream. But few of the women having these conversations are black, and few of the discussions are geared toward black women”](#) As egg freezing and related technologies gain traction, issues of access and affordability will likely become a focus of continued media coverage.

On a lighter note:

[The New Yorker, Shouts and Murmurs: Your Frozen Egg Has a Question](#)

Further reading on social egg freezing:

[The Atlantic: How One Clinic is Cutting the Cost of Egg Freezing in Half](#)

[Susan Crockin](#) of Georgetown University Law Center [outlines some of the legal and ethical issues that arise egg freezing in the New York Times](#)

[EggBanxx Fertility](#), which offers egg freezing “cocktail parties” to educate woman about egg freezing services with the tagline “Smart Women Freeze”

[Emma Birchall](#) at the Huffington Post asks, [what about men and egg freezing?](#)

AMA citation

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