

Thought Lab 15.2: Evaluating Reproductive Technologies: Safety and Effectiveness

Purpose: Assess and evaluate the safety and effectiveness of various technologies for enhancing and preventing conception.

Procedure

1. Working in small groups, select at least three of the technologies from each column of the following table. (Therefore, you will select a minimum of six technologies.)

Selected Technologies for Enhancing Conception	Selected Technologies for Preventing Conception
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • artificial insemination (AI) • assisted hatching (also called laser assisted hatching) • gamete intrafallopian transfer (GIFT) • in vitro fertilization (IVF) • intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) • surrogacy • tubal embryo transfer (TET) • zygote intrafallopian transfer (ZIFT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • condoms • fertility awareness methods • intrauterine device (IUD) • lactational amenorrhea (LAM) • oral contraceptives (pills containing both estrogen and progestin (synthetic progesterone)) • progestin-only contraceptives • spermicides • tubal ligation • vasectomy

2. With the members of your group, discuss the meanings of the terms “safety” and “effectiveness” as they apply to reproductive technologies. Develop preliminary definitions for these terms.
3. Conduct research to find data or information about the safety and effectiveness of each of the technologies you have selected.
4. In the course of your research, you may find that your definitions of the terms “safety” and “effectiveness” require modification or replacement. Redefine these terms with the members of your group. Then consult with other groups to compare definitions. As a class, develop definitions that everyone can agree to use.
5. Reexamine the information and data you have gathered in light of the class definitions of safety and effectiveness. As necessary, conduct additional research to refine your findings.
6. Consult with other groups to prepare a master chart that summarizes findings for all the technologies investigated.

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HANDOUT		

Extension

3. List three other factors that you think would affect a person's or a couple's determination of the best course of action for enhancing or preventing conception.