

1 in 27 babies conceived using IVF in 2012

The Yomiuri Shimbun One out of about 27 babies born in Japan in 2012 was conceived by in vitro fertilization, a sharp increase from the 1 in about 74 conceived that way 10 years ago, according to the Japan Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Roughly 330,000 IVF procedures were conducted in 2012, with 37,953 babies born in the same year after the procedure, both record highs.

A total of 341,750 IVF babies have been born since the first baby using the fertility treatment was conceived at Tohoku University in 1983.

In IVF treatment, a woman's egg is surgically removed and fertilized in a laboratory using a man's sperm. The fertilized egg is then surgically implanted into the woman's womb.

The number of births in Japan has decreased partly because some couples are choosing to delay marriage and because more women are suffering from infertility caused by aging. However, since public IVF subsidies began in fiscal 2004, more and more married couples have been choosing the treatment.

“In vitro fertilization is expensive and greatly burdens women both physically and mentally,” said Hidekazu Saito of the National Center for Child Health and Development, who chairs the society's subcommittee and compiled the study. “It's necessary to create an environment in which women can naturally become pregnant at appropriate ages and deliver and raise children.”Speech