

### *The Intricacies of Fertility*

Dr. David Diaz has focused career on the subject.

By Barbara Giasone

Fullerton News Tribune

January 20, 2005



Orange County's first set of quintuplets born Jan. 9 to a Fullerton couple intrigued Dr. David Diaz.

Not so much by the history-making event, but which of two fertility methods the mother may have undergone after it was discovered she had polycystic ovarian syndrome.

"There are basically two outcomes," said Diaz, founder of the West Coast Fertility Clinic that has grown to three offices, including one at 301 E. Bastanchury Road, Fullerton. "The doctor can induce ovulation by releasing eggs into the pelvis, but has no control how many eggs will go to the uterus. The eggs will ovulate on their own.

"Then, we have in-vitro where the eggs are removed prior to being released, taken to the lab and fertilized there so a certain amount of embryos can be released," Diaz said.

UCI Medical Center spokeswoman Kim Pine said last week that the parents, Aubrey and Cesar Renteria, selected the first choice: intra-uterine insemination. Diaz was not connected with the case.

During his 17-year practice in Orange County, Diaz said he always asks couples how they feel about having more children than twins. He said there is a 40 percent risk that triplets will be lost during pregnancy and 60 percent for quadruplets or quintuplets.

"I'm always extremely concerned about multiple births," he added. "Sometimes there are major health issues, and a long-term cascade of events. People who practice fertility need to be conservative about the outcome."

In the Renteria case, Aubrey had polycystic ovaries that Diaz said refers to a set of conditions caused by ovarian and pituitary disorder. The cause is only partially understood, but treatments have been successful for the vast majority of patients.

He said normally there is an imbalanced hormone production by the pituitary gland despite the patient having normal reproductive organs.

Common symptoms – not necessarily those experienced by Renteria, who is petite – include menstrual irregularities, impaired fertility and obesity. Losing weight is usually an effective treatment, Diaz said, but can be difficult because of the increased production of androgens.

In cases where ovulation is irregular or absent, clomiphene citrate may be used to induce egg production. A five-day course of the drug may be sufficient to promote ovarian follicle development.

Women who receive clomiphene citrate have a 6 to 7 percent chance of a multiple pregnancy while gonadotropin therapy increases the rate to about 15 percent. There is no increased risk of birth defect with any of these therapies.

Using laparoscopic instruments, a small opening is made in the ovarian capsule, which may result in the resumption of regular ovulation. In-vitro fertilization may also be considered if other strategies have failed.

"If obesity is an issue, we put the patient on a weight reduction program to reduce complications, such as caesarian sections, diabetes and high blood pressure," Diaz said.

Anaheim Memorial Hospital recruited the fertility specialist, who graduated from Harvard School of Medicine, in 1988. "They wanted to start a community-based program and the practice grew rapidly after the fertility egg scandal at UCI," he added.

Diaz, 54, is now working with pre-implantation genetic diagnosis that tests embryos in the lab before they are placed in the uterus.

"That's one of the reasons I'm in this field," Diaz concluded. "I like the scientific applications versus the general OB/GYN field."