

# Evaluating IVF Abroad in Prague

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## Background

Many people aspire to start a family and for some, they encounter fertility issues that require medical intervention. The gold standard in medical treatment for such a situation is In vitro fertilization (IVF), an assisted reproductive technology (ART) that involves combining egg and sperm outside of the body. The issue then becomes barriers to ART such as :

| Expensive Costs and Coverage | Laws and policy   | Physical limitations |
|------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Wait Times                   | Logistical access | Medical limitations  |

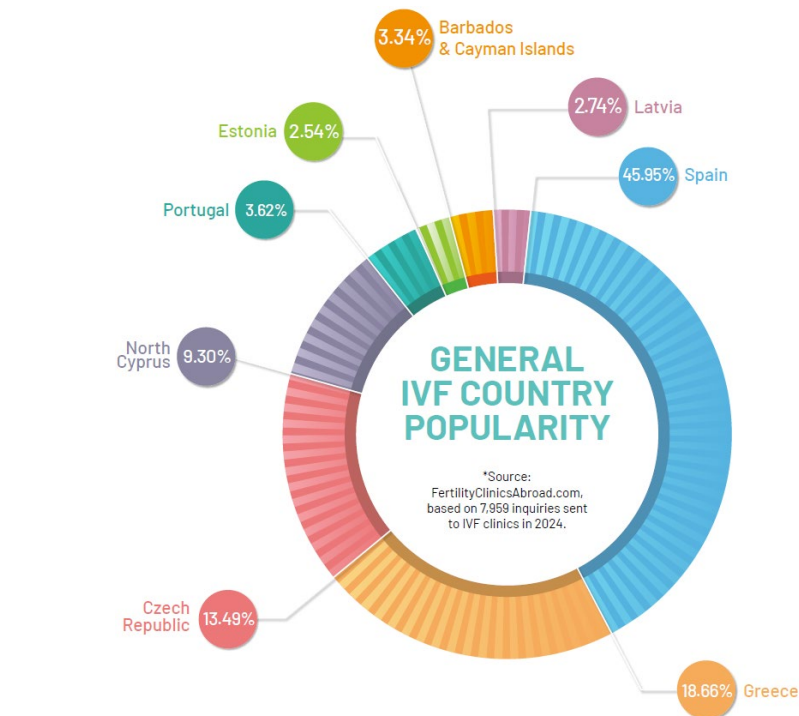
Fertility tourism provides solutions to many of these problems. Prague, Czech Republic is such a destination for IVF tourism, which was learned while at a welcome dinner in the Dejvice district while studying abroad. The tour guide mentioned the unique thriving industry as many foreigners stay within Dejvice while undergoing treatment as it has a large international community and is within close distance to many IVF clinics. This speaks volumes towards how healthcare is implemented in different countries and in particular the access and barriers to care. To find it more feasible to travel outside of the country to receive medical help is almost incredulous and is worth looking into.

## Methods

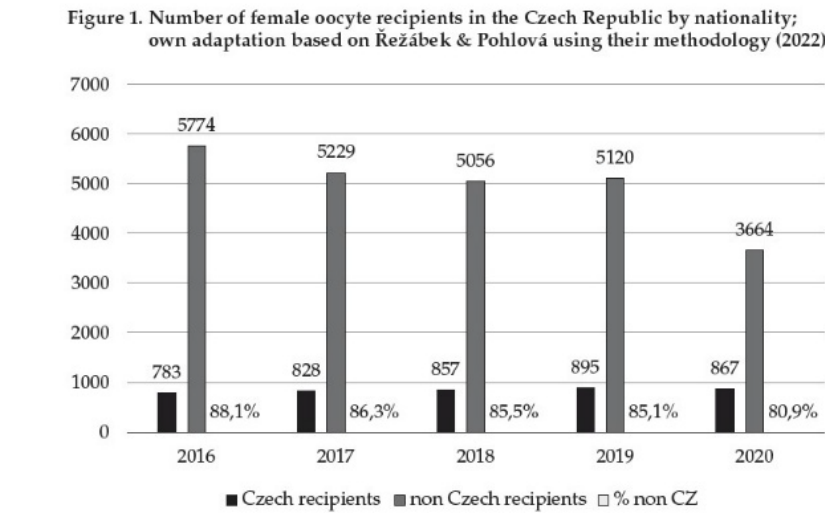
-  Study Abroad in Prague: Psychology of Culture & Food in the Czech Republic Program
-  Week 1: Prague Sights Scavenger Hunt, Taste of Prague Food Tour, Museum of Communism, Czech Life Sciences University, Saint Cyril Crypt
-  Weeks 2 and 3: BRNO, Romani Tour, Ukrainian Centre, Jewish Quarter, Jirak Market, Terezin, Student Led Excursions – Jan Palach, Sir Nicholas Winton
-  Cross Cultural Comparison through touring sights, research, reflection and analysis



Partial map of Europe with Prague, Czech Republic pinned



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## Observations

- Convenient Tourist Friendly Area Clinics Available**
  - Over a dozen clinics within Prague
  - 4 within the Dejvice area Prague 6 borough, with a larger international community
- Legal Policy and Perspective**
  - ART itself has less restrictions in Czechia; egg and sperm donation is allowed.
  - Establish laws and guidelines with precedents through the Act on Specific Health Services
  - Emphasis on the tradition concept of the family restricts access for people that are non-heterosexual, single, older, and widowed
- Costs**
  - ART, including IVF covered under universal healthcare for citizens
  - Variable for non-citizens; can be up to 1/10 the cost in the U.S. and under half the cost of other European countries
- Success Rates**
  - Beyond reputation or claims, IVF is reported and results registered through The European IVF Monitoring Consortium for the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology with intention towards a world unified registry



Clayo Clinic, Prague, Czech Republic



IVF CUBE, Prague, Czech Republic



Unica Clinics, Prague & Brno, Czech Republic



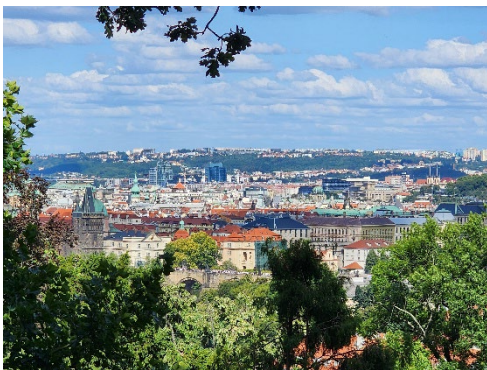
Gynem Fertility Clinic, Prague, Czech Republic

## Main Takeaways

- Prague IVF maintains their reputation as a destination for IVF tourism through their continued innovation starting from their first IVF birth success in 1982, just 4 years after the first world successful IVF birth.
- Prague and Czechia have a history of innovation hailing from the inventions of the yellow pencil, sugar cubes, and contact lens.
- IVF in Prague continues to grow and make progress through commitment to high standards, as is their intent.
- This is not unlike how Czechia, is the largest exporter of poppy seeds, has a thriving automobile industry as well as “Czech” Belgian Malinois export.
- The culture and efforts of Prague and Czechia as a whole are resourceful and resilient, thus they thrive in IVF, resource scarce and exhaustive treatment.

## Conclusion

- With a booming tourism industry generating billions, and continued legal barriers brought on by the trend of conservatism in many political arenas, I can determine no impediment to Prague's growth in IVF tourism.
- Cultural humility has allowed for a perspective shift, none more than during my experience in Prague at a guest lecture, it was pointed out to our group that 3 of the top 20 companies in the world are within the state of Washington.

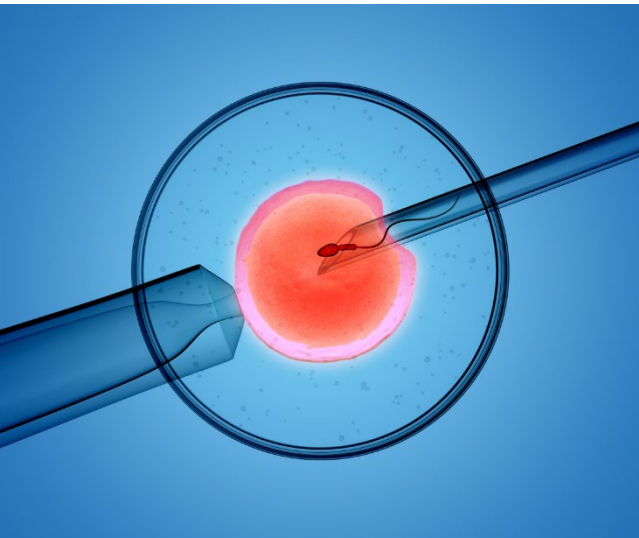
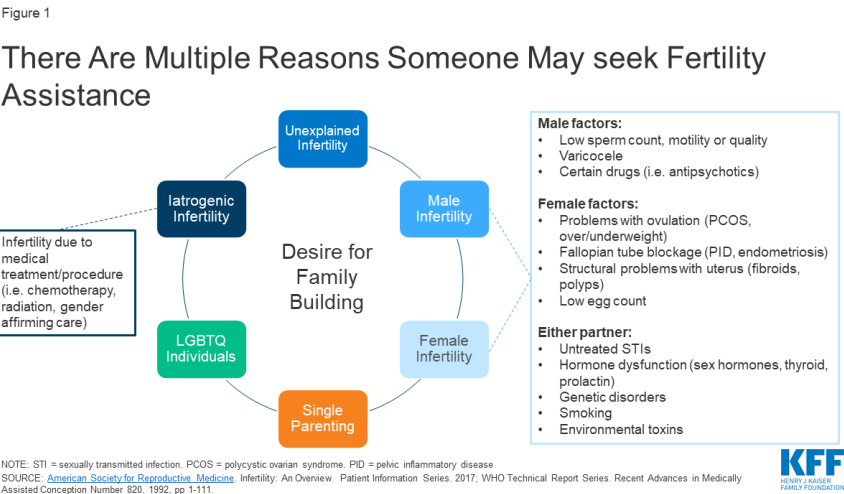


Clockwise from top left: Me at the top of Petrin Hill, UW-Tacoma students at Sodó Bistro welcome dinner, and view of Praha from Petrin Hill.

## Acknowledgements

A very sincere děkuji (thank you) to professors Leighann Chaffee M.A. and Courtney Kroll M.Ed., whose efforts went above and beyond. As well as much appreciation for the Czech universities, Taste of Prague's Jan Valenta and fellow classmates, who contributed so many different cultural perspectives on Prague..

## References



3D rendering of the icsi (intracytoplasmic sperm injection) process - in which a single sperm is injected directly into an egg