

FUNDING PROGRAM FOR NEXT GENERATION WORLD-LEADING RESEARCHERS

Project Title: Commercialization of Assisted Reproduction and Reproductive Tourism in the Globalized World: Ethical, Legal and Social Issues

Name: Yuri HIBINO

Institution: Kanazawa University

1. Background of research

In the past several years, an increasing number of Japanese citizens have been travelling to Asian countries, seeking access to infertility treatment involving services provided by the third-party, i.e., egg donation and surrogacy. In 2008, it was reported worldwide that a Japanese man sought the surrogacy service in India but the child born as a result of this became stateless. This instance would seem to be the tip of the iceberg of the growing phenomenon of reproductive tourism and various problems it could raise. In Japan, the need to regulate the use of ART and the practice related to reproductive tourism has been recognized for some time. However, the legislature concerning these matters is still non-existent and the regulation of assisted reproductive medicine has been left in the hands of medical societies.

2. Research objectives

The objective of this research is to investigate the current status of reproductive tourism. Researches on both sides of reproductive tourism—i.e., those who provide services in the third-party reproduction and those who benefit from them—are carried out. Based on findings, the ethical, legal and social issues related to reproductive tourism are examined.

3. Research characteristics (incl. originality and creativity)

(1)Based on researches on both sides of reproductive tourism—i.e., beneficiaries and service providers--, this phenomenon is comprehensively studied.

(2)The proper practice of assisted reproduction is considered from the perspective of women and children.

(3)Researches are carried in view of effective prevention and control of the growth of eugenics and excessive commoditization of the human body, which lead to degradation of dignity of the human being.

(4)In light of empirical studies on reproductive tourism, policies concerning the assisted reproduction are proposed. Research findings would also assist the government to deal with reproductive tourism through proper legal or administrative measures.

4. Anticipated effects and future applications of research

The result of this research would make valuable contributions to creation of a new paradigm for assisted reproduction and, ultimately, creation of a vision of society which would realize gender equality in the context of an aging society with the low birthrate.