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Strypstein, L.; Van Moer, E.; Nekkebroeck, Julie; Slegers, Ileen; Tournaye, H.; Demeestere, I.; Dolmans, M-M; Verpoest, W; De Vos, M

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1 **Title:**

2 First live birth after fertility preservation using vitrification of oocytes in a woman with
3 mosaic Turner syndrome

4 **Abstract:**

5 Purpose: To report the case of a young woman diagnosed with Turner syndrome (TS)
6 who achieved a live birth using her own oocytes that had been vitrified for fertility
7 preservation.

8 Methods: A 25-year-old woman with mosaic (45,X/46,XX) TS was referred for fertility
9 preservation (FP) counseling. Serum anti-Müllerian hormone (AMH) level was normal
10 (6.4 µg/L). In view of the unpredictable rate of follicle loss in TS individuals, she
11 requested FP and underwent two cycles of ovarian stimulation (OS) for oocyte
12 cryopreservation (OoC) using a GnRH antagonist protocol and recombinant follicle
13 stimulating hormone (rFSH), 200-250 IU daily for 8 resp. 12 days.

14 Results: In total, 29 metaphase II oocytes (MII) were vitrified after OS. After
15 conceiving spontaneously and achieving a live birth, she returned to the clinic five years
16 after OoC with a desire for pregnancy using in-vitro fertilization (IVF) of her
17 cryopreserved oocytes and preimplantation genetic testing (PGT-A). All 29 MII oocytes
18 were thawed; 23 oocytes survived (79.3%) and were inseminated with partner sperm
19 using intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI). Thirteen oocytes were fertilized
20 resulting in three good quality blastocysts which were vitrified after trophectoderm
21 biopsy for PGT-A using array-CGH. Two blastocysts were found to be euploid. One
22 was thawed and transferred to the uterus using a HRT priming protocol. An uneventful

23 pregnancy occurred. The patient delivered a healthy baby girl weighing 3490 g at 40
24 weeks of gestation.

25 **Conclusions:** We report the first live birth achieved using cryopreserved oocytes in a
26 woman diagnosed with mosaic TS. Cryopreservation of oocytes after ovarian
27 stimulation is a realistic option for FP in selected post menarche individuals with
28 mosaic TS. Whether PGT-A may reduce the risk of pregnancy loss in TS has to be
29 confirmed by further studies.

30 **Keywords:**

31 Turner syndrome, fertility preservation, oocyte vitrification, PGT-A

32 **Introduction:**

33 Turner syndrome (TS) is one of the most frequent sex chromosome disorders with an
34 estimated prevalence of 1 in 2,500 live births and is the most diagnosed chromosomal
35 aberration in female conceptuses [1,2]. The clinical manifestations vary and may include
36 short stature, webbed neck, unusual facies, broad chest with widely spaced nipples,
37 cardiovascular and renal abnormalities, and autoimmune disorders such as primary
38 hypothyroidism [3,4]. The syndrome is characterized by a complete or partial loss of one
39 X chromosome and approximately half of the TS individuals have a mosaic complement,
40 most commonly 45X/46XX [3]. The diagnosis of TS can be incidental, following a non-
41 invasive prenatal test (NIPT) or an amniocentesis, or made postnatally. Most women with
42 TS are infertile due to an accelerated rate of germ cell loss. Although the ovarian reserve
43 in 90% of women with TS will be depleted before adulthood [5], fecundity in women
44 with Turner syndrome mosaicism or a structural X chromosomal aberration is often less
45 severely impacted [6]. Because of the high risk of premature ovarian failure (POF), timely
46 counseling about reproductive options should allow young individuals with TS and their

47 parents to make informed decisions regarding fertility preservation (FP) and future
48 pregnancy [2]. Nevertheless, women with TS should only pursue pregnancy after
49 evaluation of their cardiovascular risk [7]. Indeed, women with TS, particularly those
50 with a bicuspid aortic valve, coarctation of the aorta and/or hypertension, have an
51 increased risk of aortic dissection or rupture during pregnancy or in the immediate
52 postpartum period [8,9] and the risk of death may be as high as two percent [6]. Moreover,
53 women with TS, including those with mosaic karyotypes, have a higher risk of pregnancy
54 loss and obstetric complications, irrespective of whether the pregnancy is achieved with
55 the woman's own or with donated oocytes [10]. In view of this, clinical guidelines have
56 been developed to optimize care for women with TS who desire pregnancy [11].
57 To enhance the probability of own genetic offspring, cryopreservation of oocytes [12]
58 or ovarian tissue [13] has been proposed, although pregnancies after FP have not been
59 reported in women with TS. In view of the paucity of data on follicle health in women
60 with TS, there is no consensus of the optimal timing of ovarian stimulation (OS) for
61 oocyte vitrification, although it has been recommended that OS in young girls with TS
62 should be postponed until AMH levels start to decline [14]. We here report the first live
63 birth after FP using vitrification of oocytes in a young woman with mosaic TS.

64

65 **Methods:**

66 **Patient History**

67 The patient was a 24-year-old woman who had been diagnosed with TS mosaicism at the
68 age of 11 years. Turner syndrome had been suspected due to growth retardation during
69 childhood and was confirmed by cytogenetic analysis, with fluorescence in situ
70 hybridization showing a 45,X[14]/46,XX[86] karyotype in lymphocytes and a
71 45,X[36]/46,XX[64] karyotype in cells from a buccal swab. The patient had shown

72 spontaneous pubertal development and menarche at the age of 13 with regular menstrual
73 cycles of 28 days. No structural cardiac or renal anomalies had been detected, except for
74 recurrent pyelonephritis. Because of her short stature, growth hormone had been
75 administered from the age of 11 until 15 years. At the age of 24 years, the patient was
76 referred to our center to discuss future reproductive options. She did not have a partner at
77 that time. She was referred to a cardiologist for pre-pregnancy work-up. Peripheral blood
78 pressure was normal (124/82 mmHg on the right arm and 131/87 mmHg on the left arm).
79 Aortic diameters were assessed using magnetic resonance angiography (MRA) and were
80 normal, with an aortic index of 18.2 mm/m². The patient provided her written informed
81 consent for this case report.

82

83 **Biophysical profile, hormone analysis and pelvic imaging**

84 The patient's height, weight and body mass index (BMI) were 160 cm, 70 kg and 27.3
85 kg/m². The baseline ovarian hormonal profile was as follows: anti-Müllerian hormone
86 (AMH) 6.4 µg/L (reference range 1.7-8.2 µg/L, AMH Gen II ELISA kit, Beckman
87 Coulter, Brea, CA), FSH 3.4 IU/L, LH 3.4 IU/L and estradiol 33 ng/L (Cobas 6000®,
88 Roche, Basel, Switzerland). A pelvic ultrasound scan showed a normal sized anteverted
89 uterus and ovaries with an antral follicle count of 37.

90

91 **Ovarian stimulation, oocyte retrieval and vitrification**

92 The potential future reproductive options and strategies were discussed with the patient,
93 including the option of a conservative approach with follow-up of ovarian reserve
94 markers, and, alternatively, the option of fertility preservation using OoC. In view of the
95 favorable functional ovarian reserve parameters, suggesting normal ovarian response
96 after ovarian stimulation, the patient preferred to embark on a procedure for OoC rather

97 than adopting an approach of regular follow-up of serum AMH levels. Ovarian
98 stimulation was performed with recombinant follicle-stimulating hormone (rFSH,
99 Puregon[®], 200IU daily, Organon). A GnRH antagonist ganirelix acetate (Orgalutran[®],
100 injection 250 µg, Organon) was added daily from the sixth day of stimulation. Oocyte
101 maturation was triggered with GnRH agonist triptorelin (Gonapeptyl[®], injection 0.2mg,
102 Ferring) when 3 follicles had a mean diameter of ≥ 20 mm. The patient underwent
103 transvaginal oocyte retrieval under local anesthesia 36 hours later. Denuded mature
104 oocytes were vitrified within 2h after oocyte retrieval with the High Security
105 Vitrification[®] device (CryoBiosystems, France) using the Irvine Scientific Vitrification
106 Freeze Kit (Irvine Scientific, USA) following manufacturer's protocol with minor
107 modifications [15]. A second ovarian stimulation cycle was performed two months later,
108 on the patient's request, to improve the total oocyte yield. This second round of ovarian
109 stimulation was performed with recombinant follicle-stimulating hormone (rFSH,
110 Puregon[®], 250IU daily, Organon) in a GnRH antagonist protocol with GnRH agonist
111 ovulation trigger.

112 Oocyte warming was performed using the Irvine Scientific Vitrification Freeze Kit [15],
113 and intact oocytes were inseminated within 2h using intracytoplasmic sperm injection
114 (ICSI). Embryos were cultured in individual 25µl droplets of sequential media
115 formulations (FertTM, CleavTM, BlastTM medium, Origio) and scored according to the
116 grading system developed by Gardner and Schoolcraft [16]. Artificially hatched
117 blastocysts of sufficient quality were subjected to trophectoderm biopsy for PGT-A using
118 array-CGH (aCGH; Bluegnome 24 Sure^o) on day 5 or 6 of development [17] and
119 subsequently vitrified [18].

120 **Results:**

121 The ovarian stimulation cycle parameters are detailed in Table 1. In total, 29 metaphase
122 II oocytes (MII) were vitrified after two rounds of ovarian stimulation.

123 Five years later, at the age of 29 years, the patient returned to our clinic with her partner.
124 She had been trying to conceive for more than twelve months. She had regular menstrual
125 cycles of 28 days. Hormone analysis did not show any endocrine disturbance. The
126 baseline hormonal ovarian profile on cycle day 3 was as follows: FSH 6.6 IU/L, LH 5.6
127 IU/L, estradiol 78 ng/L and progesterone 1.09 µg/L. Analysis of the serum AMH level
128 showed a considerable decline to 2.86 µg/L (i.e. minus 56% in four years). The partner
129 was in good health. Sperm analysis was normal with a concentration of 2.5×10^6 /ml and
130 motility of 92% (A+B+C) after capacitation.

131 In view of the increased incidence of early pregnancy loss and chromosomal
132 abnormalities in offspring of women with TS using autologous oocytes, the patient was
133 advised to consider intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) with pre-implantation
134 genetic testing for aneuploidy (PGT-A). To avoid the side effects of ovarian
135 stimulation, the patient decided to utilize her cryopreserved oocytes instead of
136 collecting fresh oocytes for IVF/ICSI and PGT-A.

137 All 29 MII oocytes were warmed; 23 oocytes survived (79.3%) and were inseminated
138 using ICSI. Thirteen oocytes were fertilized normally resulting in 11 good-quality
139 cleavage stage embryos (quality A+B). Three good-quality blastocysts developed and
140 were vitrified after trophectoderm biopsy for PGT-A. Two blastocysts were found
141 euploid, the third one was not transferable because of a segmental 19-Mb deletion
142 (del11q23.3-11qter). One embryo was warmed and transferred into the uterus using a
143 HRT priming protocol [19], but no pregnancy ensued. A few weeks after this first
144 transfer, the patient became pregnant spontaneously. A chorionic villus sampling (CVS)

145 was performed and showed a normal male fetal karyotype. Thoracic echocardiography
146 was performed in each trimester of pregnancy as well as post-partum and was reassuring.
147 The patient delivered a healthy baby boy at 38 weeks of gestation.
148 One year later, the patient returned to the clinic because of a renewed desire for children.
149 The second euploid embryo was thawed and transferred to the uterus using a HRT
150 priming protocol. An uneventful pregnancy occurred. The patient delivered a healthy
151 baby girl weighing 3490 g at 40 weeks of gestation.

152

153 **Discussion:**

154 We here report the first live birth after oocyte cryopreservation (OoC) in a woman with
155 TS. Although the pregnancy was achieved in a woman with mosaic TS who had
156 previously conceived spontaneously and who had not developed ovarian insufficiency,
157 this case can be considered as a proof-of-principle and illustrates that OoC to anticipate
158 ovarian insufficiency is a feasible option in post-menarche individuals with mosaic TS.
159 On average, 15 mature oocytes per ovarian stimulation cycle were obtained for
160 cryopreservation in the case reported here. This favorable ovarian response is comparable
161 to a mean number of 9.2 oocytes per ovarian stimulation cycle reported in women with
162 TS by Vergier et al. [12] and 13 oocytes for cryopreservation after one cycle in a TS
163 patient reported by Kavoussi et al. [20]. The oocyte survival rate after warming for our
164 patient was almost 80%. Reported survival rates after oocyte warming range between
165 94% in oocyte donation cycles [15] and 82% in cycles for elective FP [21]. It has been
166 shown that, at least in young patients ($\leq 36y$), the overall health status of the patient may
167 be reflected by the oocytes' cryopreservation efficiency, with oocytes from patients
168 cryopreserving their oocytes for non-medical reasons showing a significantly better
169 survival rate compared to those of their age-matched peers with an oncologic diagnosis

170 (91% vs. 81% respectively) [21]. Specific oocyte vitrification/warming results in women
171 with TS have not yet been reported, but our data support the feasibility of OoC in TS
172 patients.

173 The fertilization rate after ICSI was only 57% despite a normal sperm sample after
174 capacitation, which could have contributed to the relatively low euploid embryo
175 utilization rate of 7% per vitrified oocyte. A useable cleavage stage embryo rate per
176 vitrified oocyte of as high as 47% was obtained in oocyte donor cycles [15] and 22-29%
177 after (elective) FP [21], although these data are not comparable with those of our case,
178 because blastulation rates or genetic constitution were not considered in these
179 manuscripts. If live birth per vitrified oocyte is considered a more objective parameter,
180 our TS patient showed a 3% success rate, where 3-4% live birth per vitrified oocyte was
181 obtained in a large population of (elective) FP patients [21] and 2% ongoing pregnancy
182 rate per fresh oocyte after PGT-A in a large series of mosaic TS patients undergoing
183 ovarian stimulation cycles [22]. These data support the realistic FP potential of oocytes
184 after ovarian stimulation in women with TS.

185 In women with TS who have structural aberrations involving the X chromosome and in
186 mosaic cases, ovarian reserve may persist for a variable period post menarche [23].
187 However, there is no reliable genotype-phenotype correlation [24-25]; no study has thus
188 far reported a link between the level of TS mosaicism and biomarkers of ovarian reserve
189 (AMH and AFC) and accelerated follicle depletion is still likely to occur in women with
190 TS mosaicism. Fertility preservation in young individuals with TS is considered
191 controversial for several reasons. First, in subset of women with TS, pregnancy may be
192 contraindicated because of an increased cardiovascular risk. Secondly, there is a paucity
193 of data supporting the efficiency of the approach in terms of reproductive outcomes, as
194 no live births have so far been reported following utilization of cryopreserved ovarian

195 tissue or cryopreserved autologous oocytes in TS individuals. Nevertheless, it has been
196 recommended to consider and discuss FP from an early age onwards post menarche,
197 depending on the psychosocial maturity of the adolescent with TS [14,26]. Indeed,
198 ovarian stimulation followed by oocyte retrieval and cryopreservation of mature oocytes
199 has not only been reported in adults with TS [14], but also in girls with mosaic TS as
200 young as 13 years [27-28]. Serial assessment of serum AMH levels has been advocated
201 to determine the optimal time of intervention, which is when a plateau of serum AMH is
202 reached and before AMH starts to decline [28]. The frequency of AMH monitoring may
203 vary from every two to three months [14] to a more conservative approach with longer
204 intervals of two to three years [29]. Although there is no consensus regarding the optimal
205 frequency of follow-up of ovarian reserve markers in girls and women with TS
206 mosaicism, we advised our patient not to postpone ovarian stimulation for OoC; the
207 above-average AMH serum levels were considered to predict favorable ovarian response,
208 which would more likely yield a high enough number of oocytes to result in euploid
209 blastocysts after PGT-A. In a series of 256 embryos tested for aneuploidy in mosaic TS
210 women, 28.9% of blastocysts tested were euploid, 9.4% mosaic and 61.3% were
211 aneuploid [22]. Nevertheless, in a recent cytogenetic analysis of small follicles in TS
212 patients, most oocytes within primordial/primary follicles of mosaic TS patients had a
213 normal karyotype, and aneuploidy was largely confined to the granulosa cells of follicles
214 [2]. Nevertheless, there is currently little knowledge about the exact role of PGT-A as a
215 tool to reduce the incidence of pregnancy loss and to increase the chances of motherhood
216 using autologous oocytes in women diagnosed with TS [22]. Indeed, the risk of pregnancy
217 loss in women with TS who use donor oocytes is still increased compared to the general
218 oocyte donor population [30], which seems to point towards other factors such as
219 prolonged hypoestrogenism or intrinsic hypoplasia of the uterus.

220 Spontaneous pregnancies occur in 2-5% of women with TS, mostly in women with
221 mosaic karyotypes [31,32]. The patient reported here also had a live birth after
222 spontaneous conception and an uneventful pregnancy before she had a pregnancy using
223 her vitrified oocytes. The use of autologous cryopreserved oocytes in a woman with TS
224 and premature ovarian failure would have illustrated more convincingly the importance
225 of oocyte cryopreservation for FP in women with TS. Our patient may be considered as
226 someone at the more favorable end of the reproductive spectrum of women with TS.
227 Therefore, one could argue that oocyte cryopreservation in this patient with mosaic TS
228 may be categorized as an intervention for planned OoC rather than medical fertility
229 preservation. On a similar note, OoC has also been offered to women at risk of premature
230 ovarian failure (POF) for other reasons, e.g. because of a family history of POF or because
231 of severe endometriosis; these women often do not show any signs of incipient follicle
232 depletion at the time of FP, which illustrates the thin line between medical FP and planned
233 (elective) FP. Nevertheless, after proper counselling of the pros and cons of a
234 conservative versus a more proactive approach of FP using OoC, including the potential
235 beneficial impact on the psychosocial wellbeing of the individual, we would advocate to
236 discuss the option of OoC to all young women with TS mosaicism because of the
237 increased risk of accelerated follicle loss. Whether OoC should be considered in TS
238 individuals in whom pregnancy is contra-indicated because of an unacceptably high
239 cardiovascular risk and who may consider gestational surrogacy in the future is another
240 matter of debate. In line with previous recommendations by others [11], we recommend
241 OoC in TS individuals at a young age, including in those with favorable ovarian reserve
242 markers. At best, OoC should be performed at a time when AMH levels have reached a
243 plateau and before they start to decline, to ensure optimal ovarian response and maximize

244 the number of available oocytes for the patient, especially when a PGT-A procedure is
245 considered upon utilization of the oocytes (Figure 1).

246

247 **Conclusion:**

248 We here illustrate that oocyte cryopreservation is a viable option for young individuals
249 with TS mosaicism who have experienced menarche and are psychologically mature
250 enough to undertake the procedures involved. We recommend that all post menarche
251 girls with TS be evaluated for ovarian reserve assessment, and patients and
252 families receive multidisciplinary counselling regarding oocyte cryopreservation as a
253 realistic option for fertility preservation.

254

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