



[\(view online\)](#) **California Schemin'**, by CBC National Director, Jennifer Lahl

In an effort to get more eggs into the hands of cloning researchers, the president of the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), Alan Trounson, recently suggested the solution to the human egg shortage is to implement an "egg-sharing" program. Rule number one, always BEWARE

of euphemisms!

At the February 28, 2008, the CIRM Standards Working Group, Trounson is quoted as [saying](#), "The demand for oocytes may be way beyond what we can possibly deliver," and

"Women are not prepared to go through those procedures without some form of compensation." Of course, Trounson's complaint is in direct response to the number of grant applications CIRM is receiving for cloning research requiring human eggs. You see, this was [never](#) really about all those [surplus embryos](#).

The wrinkle in their master Proposition 71 plan, which Klein and Co. neglected to smooth out before taking it to the California voters, was assuring that they could pay for human eggs. Currently in California, cloners, using proposition 71 funds, cannot pay for human eggs, a snafu I imagine the architects of Prop. 71 regret missing to this day. The fertility industry can and does pay for human eggs. So, this certainly begs the question, Why can the IVF industry pay for eggs but the cloning researchers can't?

It should be noted that Trounson made his earlier mark as a [pioneer](#) of *in vitro* fertilization. It's curious, to say the least, that Samuel Wood, CEO of Stemagen, who [announced](#) on January 17, 2008, that Stemagen had "become the first in the world to create, and meticulously document, a cloned human

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CBC in the WSJ!: The debate over the morality of renting wombs is highlighted in the WSJ article quoting Jennifer Lahl. [read the article.](#)



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embryo using somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT)," is also a [fertility doctor](#) turned cloner.

My colleague, [Josephine Quintavalle](#), was prophetic in her [prediction](#) that the IVF doctor and the cloning researcher would 'lock swords' over the competition for eggs.

So, who exactly are these women who won't want to endure *those procedures* without compensation in exchange for sharing some of their eggs? Well, they are infertile women, who are undergoing fertility treatment using their *own* eggs, not, young fertile egg-donor women. Egg donors aren't "sharing" eggs. Infertile women are going to be asked to share their eggs with the cloning researchers, but only those eggs they don't want or won't need. That's why this whole egg sharing scheme sounds so polite and altruistic.

But of course, all of this talk about egg sharing as the solution is yesterday's news. I had the good fortune to recently attend [this](#) conference in London on Mild Approaches in Assisted Reproduction: emphasis on *mild*. The only way the IVF industry can get surplus eggs to "share" is by practicing *severe* assisted reproduction. The medical management of the infertile patient as currently practiced is en passé, and IVF du rigour is on the move to the 'less is better' new mild approaches. Boon Chin Heng's [recent article](#) in the Journal of Assisted Reproduction and Genetics, titled "*Egg sharing in return for subsidized fertility treatment - ethical pitfalls and challenges*," echoes much that was spoken at the conference on Mild Approaches in Assisted Reproduction. Women do much better with minimal stimulation. Why? High-dose [gonadotrophins](#) have associated risks. Ovarian hyperstimulation is dangerous for women. Egg quality is much better with minimal stimulation and endometrial receptivity is better, increasing the success of embryo implantation. And there is of course the [risk of future reduction](#) in fertility in the hyperstimulated woman. So, the proposed solution by the CIRM needs to be exposed for what it really is: A scheme which would put women at risk and jeopardize their future fertility all because California cloners don't want to fess up that they have egg on their faces.

Tell us what you think. Should California ban egg sharing? [Send us your comments.](#)

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