

IF IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR KATE: ENQUIRIES INTO PRIVATE MATERNITY CARE UP 216% IN ONE YEAR

- **UK enquires for private Obstetrics-Gynaecology consultations up 216% in the past year**
- **Demand for private fertility treatment nearly doubles (up 93%) in just one year - but those seeking this outside the NHS could pay as much as £295 per session**
- **Alternative treatments are also on the rise, with enquiries into fertility acupuncture private clinics soaring by almost two thirds (65%) in 12 months**
- **There has also been a sharp rise in private IVF procedures abroad - overseas enquiries have increased by 64% in one year**

Friday 24 April 2014 – Due to check into the Lindo Wing at St Mary's Hospital in Paddington any day now, the Duchess of Cambridge will have her second child delivered with every comfort imaginable, having received the best medical attention money can buy throughout her pregnancy.

But private health care is not just the preserve of royalty, and an increasing number of women are seeking private maternity and fertility care outside of the NHS, according to new research by private healthcare search engine, WhatClinic.com.

Across all treatments, enquiries into Obstetrics-Gynaecology clinics have risen by a third (35%) on average in the past twelve months alone. Consultations are up 216% while enquiries into private fertility have almost doubled in just one year (93%), with women paying up to £295 for an appointment. Enquiries into UK private IVF treatments have also risen by 167% in the past twelve months. Enquiries for IUD's and private pregnancy tests have fallen.

There's also growing numbers of Brits seeking private fertility procedures overseas, and with private IVF costing £2,155 per round in the UK, its easy to see why people are shopping around. The top overseas locations for private patients from the UK are the Czech Republic, Spain and Greece. IVF treatment in the Czech Republic in particular, which has seen the highest volume of enquiries in the past year, will typically cost £742 per session - nearly a third of the cost as the same treatment at home.

A WhatClinic survey of UK and Ireland based private obstetricians and gynaecologists¹ revealed that 83% have seen an increase in pregnant patients who have had private IVF treatment abroad. Enquiries into IVF abroad on the WhatClinic.com site rose 64% in the past 12 months.

Private alternative fertility treatments are also on the rise, with enquires into fertility acupuncture up two thirds (65%) in one year. In 2007, the British Medical Journal published a report stating that fertility acupuncture, when used in conjunction with IVF, could increase the success rate of pregnancy by 65%². Celine Dion reportedly used the treatment in this way after five failed rounds of IVF, giving birth to twin boys in 2010, aged 42.

The following table shows the average costs of maternity and fertility related treatments, as well as the change in demand over the past year:

Private Treatment	% increase/decrease in enquiries over the past 12 months	Average price UK
Obstetrician/Gynaecologist Consultation	216%	£144
Contraception	214%	£92

Tubal Ligation Reversal	57%	£3,000*
Antenatal Treatment	-25%	£102
IUD - Intrauterine Device	-43%	£151
Pregnancy Test	-44%	£148
Fertility Acupuncture	65%	£48

**where large numbers of prices weren't available for averages, sample prices from local clinics were given*

Dr Donald Gibb, founder of The Birth Company comments: "Although private maternity care is a considerable cost, typically around £20,000, these women are buying better access to senior medical opinion. With private care, you are a person not a number, and unfortunately the NHS is overrun with numbers.

"There has been a rise in the cost of private medical care in the past few years, but these women are primarily concerned with the ability to have detailed discussions with their doctor. They want to be able to talk at length with a specialist about the risks involved with having a baby later in life and if there is anything they can do to lower these risks.

"There have been many advancements in private maternity care in the last year alone, for example, non-invasive pre-natal testing which currently is only offered by six companies globally. This process allows the mother's blood to be tested for the baby's DNA to look for Down's Syndrome and other chromosomal disorders without any invasive surgery.

"Women often look for private scans and appointments because they want a higher level of convenience, with longer opening hours and Saturday appointments to fit busy schedules."

Emily Ross, director of WhatClinic.com, comments: "Whilst the birth of most babies won't make front page news, pregnancy is still an important time where extra care and

reassurance is greatly appreciated. It seems that private care is appealing to more and more of us in the UK.

“Although the NHS continues to offer world-class care for pregnancy and childbirth, including free dental care up to 12 months after delivery, it is impossible to match the convenience that private care can offer, especially for women who work who seek flexibility, and those who are having children later, who appreciate the extra reassurance.”

– ENDS –

Notes to Editors

Methodology

1. WhatClinic surveyed 100 obstetricians and gynaecologists in the UK and Ireland who work within private practices. Questions were asked on the emerging trends they have seen over the past year in private maternity care, the profile of their average patient, and their opinions on the industry at present.
2. Study published in the British Medical Journal (2007)
<http://www.bmj.com/content/336/7643/545>

For more information contact:

Eleanor Pickering, Rhizome PR
020 7297 3166 | emily@rhizomepr.com

About WhatClinic.com

WhatClinic.com is a clinic comparison site that lists over 100,000 clinics globally. In the last year over 17.5 million people visited the site to find, compare and book treatments across a wide range of elective, self-pay medical treatments. WhatClinic.com’s mission is to give the patient, as an empowered consumer, access to all the information they need to make an informed choice, including price, availability and reviews. WhatClinic.com was founded in 2007 by tech entrepreneur Caelen King, and is in operation in over 127 countries.