

Ovaries of early menopausal women 'awakened' to conceive baby

03 October 2013 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau



Singapore: Doctors at Stanford University, US, and St Marianna University School of Medicine, Japan, have used a new technique to 'reawaken' the ovaries of women who had a very early menopause and this has led to the birth of a baby.

The team of doctors removed the ovaries, activated them in the laboratory and re-implanted fragments of ovarian tissue in the mother. The technique has been reported in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS).

The 27 women involved in the study became infertile around the age of 30 due to 'primary ovarian insufficiency'. The condition affects one-in-100 women who essentially run out of eggs too young, leading to an early menopause.

The doctors used a combination of two techniques to wake up the sleeping follicles. First they cut the ovaries into fragments, which has been used in the past as a fertility treatment. Then a chemical to 'take the brakes off' egg development was applied. The fragments were put back at the top of the fallopian tubes and the women were given hormone therapy.

Following the treatment, residual follicles started to develop in eight women. Eggs were taken for normal in-vitro fertilization (IVF) and so far one couple has had a baby and another woman is pregnant.