Reviewer’s report

Title: The evolution of health policy guidelines for assisted reproduction in the Republic of Ireland, 2004-2009

Version: 1 Date: 28 May 2011

Reviewer: Alan S Penzias

Reviewer’s report:

The authors summarize and comment upon changes in the Irish Medical Council guidelines for assisted reproductive technology (ART) in the context of changes to the council itself and the unresolved issues left open to interpretation. The report is interesting, well written and serves an important function.

Discretionary Revisions:
1) Did the authors look at ART guidelines in other countries of roughly the same time period, specifically the HFEA in the UK and SART in the USA for similar changes?

2) IVF Indications: The manuscript might be strengthened by reporting on how governing bodies in other countries define the terms applied by the Irish Medical Council. This would allow the authors to bring unity to their community and lead others, by use of evidence, to common practice.

3) Status and Fate of embryos; Gamete donation: Perhaps the authors can expand the discussion slightly to comment upon the fractured nature of laws and guidelines in EU countries and how that has led to medical tourism and the flight of Irish patients needing gamete or embryo donation.

4) Credentials; facilities: The case is made clearly that there are no standard definitions regarding qualifications or credentials. Suggesting how they might be determined citing published data could be useful.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.