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NEWS RELEASE

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STUDY CONTRADICTS ETHICS COMMITTEE OPINION ON ELECTIVE SEX SELECTION

Investigators from New York City based *Center for Human Reproduction* question a recent opinion of the Ethics Committee of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (*Obstet Gynecol* 2007; 109:475-8) in an electronically pre-published study in the prestigious medical journal *Human Reproduction* (Gleicher N, Barad D. *The choice of gender: is elective gender selection, indeed, sexist? Hum Reprod.* 2007 Aug 31;[Epub ahead of print]).

In the earlier this year published opinion, ACOG's Ethics Committee "opposed meeting requests for sex selection for personal and family reasons, including family balancing, because of concern that such requests may ultimately support sexist practices;" i.e., discriminate against women. In the article in *Human Reproduction*, the investigators report on 96 sex selection cycles between 2004-2006, performed for family balancing purposes, and utilizing in vitro fertilization with preimplantation genetic diagnosis. The study, indeed, confirmed strong biases towards the selection of male offspring, but only in selected ethnic minorities. Caucasian and Hispanic patients actually in a majority (58%) selected for female.

The authors concluded from the study that, at least in the United States, elective sex selection for family balancing purposes, except in selected minority populations, should not be considered to support sexist practices. Moreover, existing biases should disappear as minorities better integrate into U.S. society. Universal ethics opinions, while considerate of minority behavior, should not be driven by the behavior of outliers and, instead, be based on majority practices in the population. The *Center for Human Reproduction*, located in Manhattan, NYC, is a leading clinical, and research, centers specializing in reproductive medicine and infertility. The two authors of the study are available for further comments.