

Can we cut cost and pain of IVF? Start-up CEO tries out own company's alternative way to 'mature' human eggs in lab dish instead of inside bodies

Dina Radenkovic [is] CEO of Gameto, a New York startup engineering stem cells to craft a “lightweight” version of IVF—one it thinks could appeal to professional women without time to spare. Last December, the Serbian-born doctor, who is 28, found herself at home looking at a needle loaded with hormones. She pushed it under her skin and pressed the plunger.

Radenkovic wasn't trying to get pregnant. Instead, she'd signed up for her own company's medical study of how to “mature” human eggs in a lab dish instead of inside their bodies.

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During the study, Radenkovic paid special attention to how well Gameto's solution fit with work and her time on the entrepreneurial circuit, giving talks and leading longevity seminars. In a phone interview, she ticked off a list of the downsides she encountered: one teary, emotional 24 hours when she skipped meetings and one afternoon of constipation brought on by drugs. There was also the hospital procedure in which a doctor used a probe to scrape off the immature eggs, which involved anesthesia and caused a painful next ovulation.

“So half a day off work and one day where I would say my productivity at work was not optimal,” she tallies. “This is why we think that this technology for reducing IVF from two weeks, high cost, and medical risks to something you can do over the weekend is a big breakthrough.”

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