

**Sally Biddulph:** Becky Measure's family has a history of breast cancer. Like her mum Wendy before her, she had a voluntary mastectomy at 22 to avoid the disease. However, she wouldn't want gene therapy for her children.

**Becky:** I want to be able to conceive naturally, to be able to bring my child up to the best that I can, and if I can do the same as what my mum did for me, then this breast cancer gene will possibly be something that's good in our lives rather than something that's bad.

**Biddulph:** This treatment that avoids breast cancer is costly and complicated but today's birth has proved it works.

The mother underwent a normal IVF<sup>(1)</sup> cycle at this private clinic in London which produced 11 embryos. When they were three days old, looking something like this under the microscope, a cell was taken from each embryo and tested for the defective gene. The ones that carried the gene were discarded<sup>(2)</sup>, but two that weren't were implanted into the mother, resulting in a single pregnancy and now a brand new baby girl who doesn't carry the gene.

Her family tree shows the risk. Her father carries the faulty<sup>(3)</sup> gene BRCA 1. His grandmother, mother and sister all developed breast cancer in their twenties, so his daughter would have a high chance of inheriting the gene too, increasing her risk of breast cancer by 50 to 85%.

Critics though have raised ethical concerns about screening embryos.

**Doctor:** I feel very angry about the designer baby concept because it tarnishes<sup>(4)</sup> the image of a technique that is there to screen for very serious anomalies. We're not talking about screening for banal, trivial physical characteristics. Cancer is a killer.

**Biddulph:** This treatment isn't just about cancer, it's already been used to screen out other disorders like cystic fibrosis. Doctors are now wondering if it could help prevent a wide range of genetic diseases for future generations.

**Sally Biddulph, ITV news.**

#### Lexical helpline:

1. **IVF:** in vitro fertilisation
2. **Discard (v):** get rid of, reject
3. **Faulty (adj):** that does not function correctly
4. **Tarnish (v):** damage a reputation