

Taiwanese IVF 'babies' set event record

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Three thousand Taiwanese born through in vitro fertilization form a distorted world map at the Lee Women's Hospital in Taichung yesterday, with an outsized Taiwan at the center of the map.

Photo: Chen Chien-chih, Taipei Times

A Guinness World Record was set yesterday as 3,000 Taiwanese born through in vitro fertilization (IVF) gathered in Taichung to form a map of the world.

Vice President Chen Chien-jen (陳建生) told the gathering that it was advances in medical science that made such a large number of IVF births possible.

The event was especially significant due to China's political pressure, which obstructs Taiwan from sharing its achievements in medical science and immunology with the world through participation in the WHO and other international medical organizations, Chen said.

The nation's IVF achievements have also played a role in its relationships with Southeast Asian nations, he said, adding that Taiwan has helped 700 Filipino couples have children through IVF.

Taiwan would do its utmost to help others through its New Southbound Policy, Chen added.

Taichung-based Lee Women's Hospital, which specializes in IVF and fertility treatments, organized the event as part of yesterday's IVF World Expo.

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The first IVF operations in Taiwan were conducted in 1987, and Taiwanese doctors had a 20 percent success rate, hospital director Lee Mao-sheng (李毛生) said.

Today, with the assistance of artificial intelligence, the hospital has an 80 percent success rate, he said.

As people are getting married later, more people are seeking IVF treatment, and the average age of women requesting the procedure is 39, he said.

Chen Ying-chieh (陳英吉), who was the first Taiwanese to be born through IVF, attended the event to thank Lee.

Lee said he recalled the efforts of Chen Ying-chieh's mother, who underwent six rounds of IVF treatment before doctors were successful.

For the photograph, participants donned caps colored according the continent that they were representing and then arranged into the shapes of continents.

However, Taiwan was larger proportionately to recognize the contributions Taiwanese doctors have made to IVF, the hospital said.

The photograph was taken by an aerial drone.

The hospital set a world record in 2011 for the most people born through IVF gathered in one place, when 1,232 people attended, hospital officials said.

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Several politicians attended yesterday’s event, including New Power Party Legislator Hung Tzu-yung (洪智雄), Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) legislators Huang Kuo-shu (黃國書) and Chang Liao Wan-chien (廖萬建), who represent electoral districts in the city; Chuang Ching-cheng (莊景程), an assistant professor of biomedical engineering at National Chiao Tung University who is standing for the legislature for the DPP for a Taichung seat; and Taiwan Statebuilding Party spokesman Chen Po-wei (陳博偉).

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