

Subject: Saving lives - positions at different hospitals

Date: July 2009

Answered by: Rabbi Mordechai Halperin, M.D.

Is it more important to heal Jewish people than non-Jewish people?

Practically speaking, would it be better to take a position at a hospital that has more Jewish patients, particularly religious Jewish patients, over a hospital with less observant Jews and non-Jews?

In terms of research projects, is it more important to choose medical issues more common among Jewish people?

Thank you so much!

According to halacha ruled in our generation by the masters (Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach ZTz"l and - may he live long - Rabbi Ovadia Yosef), there is a Halachic obligation to treat not only Jews but Gentiles as well, and this obligation exists on any day of the week, including Shabbat.

The question of choosing between hospitals is not a Halachic one, but a question of the doctor's personal feeling, depending on a variety of issues.

In general, it is preferable to work in the place with the highest medical standard, that is, of course, only if you have an actual possibility of maintaining Halacha and refrain from prohibited *Chilul* Shabbat, either on a non-endangered patient or other cases.

Subject: Donating embryos for IVF

Date: April 2009

Answered by: Rabbi Mordechai Halperin, M.D.

Dear Rabbi Halperin –

I have been doing some research and it seems like you a good person to ask this question of.

We are a couple who were blessed with one child and then had a lot of difficulty producing any more. We went through several years of fertility treatments and a lot of heartache, but thank God, we have been blessed with 2 more healthy children.

At this point, we no longer wish to go through any more fertility treatments. However, we do have several more embryos (all our own eggs and sperm) stored at our clinic from our IVF treatments. We have been debating what is the right thing to do with them. Then just recently we became re-aquainted with another Jewish couple whom we had not seen for a number of years. It turns out that they are experiencing fertility issues and have been unable to have any children. The wife is now over 40 and doctors are not giving her very good chances with traditional IVF. She is

obviously very distressed at this situation. SO it occurred to us that we could donate our extra embryos to them if that were permissible. From my own limited research on this topic, I see that there are halachic issues with this, but it seems also like embryo donation is allowed under some circumstances. So we would like to know if this situation is permissible and under what conditions that might be so.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

In light of the great dispute over the status of the baby that would be conceived of an embryo donation, the prominent Poskim prohibit such a procedure when the future Halachic condition of the offspring is compromised.

Regarding the couple in need of a donation, there are better alternatives Halachically, and those can be explored with rabbis that are familiar with the couple.