

Being a single mom in Italy, by choice

Both single and mother, an almost impossible combination under the Italian law. Yet the number of adoptions and donor insemination abroad or at home are growing



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In Italy, there are more than one million single-parent families with minor children. In 86% of the cases the single parent is the mother. Among them are also women who do not want to give up the dream of a child (with a pregnancy or through adoption) even if they do not have a partner.

The Italian law does not allow single women to undergo assisted reproduction treatments nor it allows them to adopt a child. In Italy, if you are female but not in a relationship with a male, it is very complicated to fulfil the dream of a child. Reason why, according to partial data gathered from associations, foreign clinics and seed banks, the number of single wannabe mothers, is increasing.

Many women turn to assisted reproduction centers abroad. “In 2016 - Dr. Amelia Rodríguez-Aranda, director of the Eugin fertility clinic in Barcelona, explains - we had 125 Italian single patients, and in 2017 the number almost quadrupled, they were 485”. According to the Danish seed bank Cryos, the number of Italian women who contact them to receive a vial of sperm from a donor for “home-made” insemination, is on the raise.

Having a child is a very delicate decision which presumes a complicated path especially if you are a single woman in Italy. “Many women who turn to us - explains Elena Venuti, psychologist at the fertility clinic Eugin - ask for support over the phone, via email or in person. They call us at the

end of a long period of reflection, but they still have doubts and fears. They ask about the potential consequence for the child for not having a father, or how to explain their birth”.

Social suffering

The average age of women who go to these kinds of clinics is 38. “There is general social suffering - Venuti continues -. Many of our patients have graduated and have had lived through an uncertain professional path. They waited the right time for a pregnancy but when the time arrived, they didn't have a partner. Yet their desire for motherhood was still there.

Italian women probably resort to fertility clinics or homemade insemination because in Italy the option of adoption is provided only to married couples that have been together for at least three years, unless they have been living together for a longer time before getting married. “It is an obstacle course - Andrea Maestri concludes. The rule is outdated. We need a law that can better suit the evolution of our society”.

(Translated by Anna Martinelli)