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Assisted reproduction and Middle East kinship: a regional and religious comparison

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Abstract This article compares the use of assisted reproductive technology (ART) and resultant kinship formations in four Middle Eastern settings: the Sunni Muslim Arab world, the Sunni Muslim but officially 'secular' country of Turkey, Shia Muslim Iran and Jewish Israel. This four-way comparison reveals considerable similarities, as well as stark differences, in matters of Middle Eastern kinship and assisted reproduction. The permissions and restrictions on ART, often determined by religious decrees, may lead to counter-intuitive outcomes, many of which defy prevailing stereotypes about which parts of the Middle East are more 'progressive' or 'conservative'. Local considerations – be they social, cultural, economic, religious or political – have shaped the ways in which ART treatments are offered to, and received by, infertile couples in different parts of the Middle East. Yet, across the region, clerics, in dialogue with clinicians and patients, have paved the way for ART
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