EFFECT OF THE GREAT EAST JAPAN EARTHQUAKE ON THE BEHAVIOR OF INFERTILE PATIENTS
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[OBJECTIVES]
The Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011 gave a dramatic effect to infertile patients and infertility treatment facilities. Especially people living in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima suffered severe damage by tsunami or nuclear accident. Objective of this report is to assess changes in the behavior of infertile patients living in these three prefectures in response to the earthquake.

[METHODS]
We sent questionnaires to 13 infertility treatment facilities in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima to gather information on damage to the facilities, and monthly numbers of in vitro fertilization (IVF), intracytoplasmic sperm injection, frozen embryo transfer and artificial insemination (AIH) procedures performed from January 2010 to March 2013. Population migration information was acquired from the Statistics Bureau of Japan.

[RESULTS]
The populations of all three prefectures decreased in 2011 (April 2011 to March 2012). Infertility treatment was decreased, especially in Fukushima, but AIH was increased by 20.8% in Miyagi. In 2012, the population only increased in Miyagi. IVF increased by 18.8% in Miyagi but decreased by 67.1% in Fukushima, while AIH increased by 24.2% in Iwate, compared with 2010.

[CONCLUSIONS]
Infertility treatment is decreasing in Fukushima, but increasing relative to population growth in Miyagi. The increase in AIH in 2011 suggests that new patients may have started treatment, with a step up in 2012 indicated by an increase in IVF. We suggest that the earthquake may have motivated infertile patients to act to have children.