MALE INFERTILITY PROGRAM GIVES HOPE TO COUPLES WISHING TO BUILD A FAMILY

COLUMBUS, Ohio – With limited options for the treatment of male infertility, the introduction of intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) at The Ohio State University Medical Center opens new horizons for this common cause of infertility.

"In the past, options for couples with male infertility were limited to either donor sperm or adoption," says Dr. David Seifer, director of the University Fertility Institute and director of University Medical Center's Division of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility. "With the availability of ICSI, such couples can now use a limited number of a husband's sperm and have fertilization rates equivalent to couples without male infertility."

During the ICSI procedure, a single sperm is injected directly into an egg to allow fertilization, using high magnification in the laboratory.

Male factor accounts for 40 percent of couples' infertility problems. Causes of male infertility include low sperm count, lack of proper motility (the ability to move spontaneously), or abnormally shaped sperm.

When there are very few sperm present in an ejaculate, ICSI can be beneficial. In contrast to the millions of sperm necessary for normal fertilization, less than a few hundred live sperm are needed for ICSI.

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For men with very few motile sperm or few normally shaped sperm, ICSI may be effective in allowing them to become biological parents.

ICSI also can be effective for other couples, for whom fertilization does not occur even with traditional in vitro fertilization -- which may be caused by sperm antibodies, defective binding of sperm to the egg, or other abnormalities of sperm function not normally detected on a semen analysis. In some cases, fertilization may not occur because of egg problems; too thick a shell, absent receptors for sperm, or premature hardening of the egg’s shell making it impermeable to sperm. By placing the sperm inside the egg, these types of abnormalities can be overcome.

University Fertility Institute started performing ICSI, an outpatient procedure, in January 1996. ICSI currently provides a pregnancy rate which exceeds 25 percent.

At University Fertility Institute a couple sees their primary physician consistently throughout the process. “Our staff understands the emotions couples experience, ranging from hopefulness, anticipation and excitement to frustration, anxiety, and at times isolation in their quest to build a family,” says Seifer. “Up until now, there were few options available to couples with male infertility. We are committed to providing continuity of personalized care which is tailored to the individual couple.”

The University Fertility Institute is located in Camelot Women’s Health Center on Knightsbridge Boulevard, just off of S.R. 315. For more information about ICSI, call University Fertility Institute at (614) 442-5761.

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Contact: Betsy Samuels, Medical Center Communications, (614) 293-3737.