

# Andrology Update

The Hull Andrology Unit

The Women and Children's Hospital, Hull Royal Infirmary, Anlaby Road, Hull HU3 2JZ.  
01482 382648 [www.hullivf.org.uk](http://www.hullivf.org.uk) (Andrology and GP specific areas available)

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## Sperm Freezing Research

When sperm are frozen, the survival rates following thawing are extremely poor (0-50%) for most men. This usually limits treatment options of assisted conception to the more complex method of ICSI and also reduces the number of men approved for sperm donation.

Directional freezing (DF) is a method of freezing that has recently been tested using human sperm. DF aims to control ice formation as opposed to inducing random and more damaging patterns of crystallisation. DF was found to produce greater post thaw results in 53% of samples tested. Cryopreservation also causes sperm velocity to decline however DF was found to have the least effect on speed.

In this study, by a member of our Andrology team, we demonstrated the usefulness of directional freezing. With further investigation this work could improve sperm freezing reducing the need for complex assisted reproductive technologies and improve the acceptance rate for sperm donors.

## Points to remember – User guidance

In 2015 there has been an increase in the number of requests unsuitable for processing. Please remember:

- Infertility testing samples are to be taken *directly* to the Andrology department within one hour of production.
- Three patient identifiers are required on the request card.
- To use the correct request card as we reserve the right to reject the sample if an incorrect form is used.

## Christmas closure

The Andrology Unit will be closed from and including **Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2015** and will re-open on **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016**.

## Psychological stress & testicular function

A recent study, published in the journal Fertility and Sterility last month, on 1,215 Danish men, found that there was a negative association between self-reported stress and semen quality.

Those with the highest stress level had 38% lower sperm concentration, 34% lower total sperm count and 15% lower semen volume than men with intermediate stress levels. The total number of morphologically normal sperm was lower in those with stress scores above the reference level.

