

A Day in the Life of a Health Care Scientist

Andrology

What does your typical week consist of?

In a typical week, I perform c 50 semen analyses; these include both NHS GP referrals and private patients and test for either fertility analysis or the presence of sperm following a post-vasectomy, thus every day is different! When performing fertility analysis, I look at how many sperm there are, how they are moving and their shape, I am then able to refer patients to specialist Urologists or subfertility consultants for further investigations, providing answers and aiding in their initial stages of fertility treatment.

For couples who then choose to undergo assisted reproduction, I then perform a more detailed semen analysis checking for viability and anti-sperm antibodies before preparing the sperm for either IVF or ICSI treatment on the day of egg collection in the embryology laboratory.

I also perform sperm freezes for a variety of patients, for example those undergoing chemotherapy treatments which may compromise their fertility potential in the future, those undergoing gender reassignment and those in high-risk careers such as the military. This preserves their fertility prior to any medical treatments or procedures enabling them to use such samples at a time that suits them in the future if needed.

Finally, I assist in theatre with both egg collections and surgical sperm retrievals, the latter being carried out on patients with no sperm being found in their ejaculate, this involves working as a multi-disciplinary team alongside a Urologist and nursing staff to extract testicular tissue which I then process in the laboratory. Providing hope to such patients for a biologically related child is so fulfilling.

Why should I become a healthcare scientist?

Working as a healthcare scientist is such a rewarding career, you not only get to thrive in a laboratory setting assessing living cells down a microscope every day, but you also remain at the forefront of medical research actively seeking ways to improve the service we provide. My favourite part however is how closely we get to work alongside patients, from their very first GP referred diagnostic semen evaluation to their final embryo transfer, supporting them in achieving their dreams.

