



repro^{med} Newsletter

SUMMER 2010

Fee options address Medicare changes

The Australian Government has made changes to cap the level of Medicare funding and rebates available to patients undergoing fertility treatment.

The changes came into effect on 1 January 2010.

To help make treatment affordable and accessible, Repromed is able to offer patients a number of different payment options for IVF.

Repromed's Medical Director, Dr Richard Henshaw, said patients with private health insurance could now access a standard IVF treatment cycle at Repromed for an upfront fee of \$2,172.80. This payment would be made prior to the collection of drugs required for treatment.

A second payment of \$2,172.80 just prior to egg collection would represent a total cost of \$4,345.60. However, with the Medicare rebate, the final out of pocket cost to the patient would be \$2,795.60.

Dr Henshaw said these figures applied for the first IVF cycle in a calendar year.

"The process of reimbursement from Medicare is complex and can be time consuming," he said.

"While the option outlined above has the benefit of a relatively low upfront cost, it means that Medicare will be unable to refund your safety net reimbursement of \$1,550.00 for up to three months.

"Consequently, Repromed has introduced further payment options which may be considered based upon how much you can spend up front and how quickly you wish to access Medicare



rebates."

The second option offers an upfront fee of \$2,172.80 with a higher payment of \$5,043.70 at egg collection. This option allows Repromed to electronically lodge your safety net reimbursement claim with Medicare ensuring a reimbursement of \$4,420.00 within ten days of completion of the IVF cycle.

Under this option, the final out of pocket cost for the first IVF cycle in a calendar year is again \$2,795.60, but it means swift reimbursement from Medicare.

Option three allows for full payment of \$7,216.50 prior to collection of drugs. Repromed will immediately lodge the safety net claim allowing full payment of the reimbursement (\$4,420.00) within ten days of completion of your cycle. This option has the benefit of a single payment and quick reimbursement, again with a final out of pocket cost of \$2,795.60.

"Repromed recognises that people have differing financial

circumstances and we are happy to discuss individualised payment schedules," Dr Henshaw said.

Payment options are available for patients without private insurance and Repromed has a public contract with the SA Health Department to provide assistance for day surgery costs to uninsured patients.

Repromed is the only IVF clinic in South Australia that is able to subsidise theatre and day treatment fees for egg collection and embryo transfer under the State Government public contract.

"Patients without private health insurance who are treated at Repromed under this scheme will not be charged for theatre and day treatment fees."

"This compares favourably with other private hospitals that may charge considerably more for theatre and day stay rates above quoted IVF fees."

For further information on payment options, call (08) 8333 8111 and ask for Repromed's Fees Help Desk.

Study shows male obesity aff

Repromed maintains a world-acclaimed research and development base exploring the causes of and potential new treatments for infertility.

The research focus is to ensure new and proven developments are quickly embraced into Repromed's laboratory protocols and clinical programs so that patients receive state-of-the-art assessment and treatment.

Among Repromed's research outcomes most recently reported is evidence that male obesity is associated with decreased pregnancy rates in their partners.

The study of 305 couples presenting at Repromed is believed to be the first to confirm that paternal obesity affects pregnancy outcomes in treatments such as IVF.

Dr Michelle Lane, Repromed's Scientific Director, said there was extensive evidence that overweight women had more difficulty conceiving and having a healthy baby.

"A healthy weight for women undergoing assisted conception improves clinical pregnancy rates," Dr Lane said. "However, the effects of male obesity on pregnancy outcomes has until now not been so clear."

Couples undergoing IVF or a single sperm injection procedure at Repromed were recruited into the study.



Michelle Lane

Lifestyle choices should not be confined to the female partner when a couple is striving to achieve their dream of having a healthy baby.



Hassan Bakos

All women in the study group were aged less than 38, while the average age of male partners was 35.

Paternal body mass index was measured prior to the treatment cycle with participants classified as normal weight, overweight, obese and morbidly obese.

Clinical pregnancy rates were defined by the presence of foetal heartbeat on ultrasound six weeks following embryo transfer.

Andrology Scientist, Dr Hassan Bakos, said 79 per cent of the males in the study group were overweight or obese.

"Paternal body mass index was not associated with early embryo development," Dr Bakos said. "However, by day four or five of embryo cell division - when paternal genetic influence comes into play - there was some evidence of impaired development."



It is important for couples to focus on fertility health th

"More importantly, clinical pregnancy rates were significantly reduced as paternal body mass index increased."

"Current studies in our laboratory suggest that DNA damage and oxidative stress may be involved. Oxidative stress occurs when the generation of free radicals exceeds the body's own antioxidant defence mechanisms, thereby leading to cellular damage."

Dr Bakos said it was important for couples to focus on fertility health through good lifestyle choices, including diet and exercise.

"Clearly, these lifestyle choices should not be confined to the female partner when a couple is striving to achieve their dream of having a healthy baby," he added.

Affects chances of conceiving



Repromed's research and development programs

Other examples of Repromed's current research and development projects include:

- improving egg and embryo freezing protocols, including the introduction of vitrification, a new freezing method to overcome damage from ice crystal formation;
- technologies to select the best embryo based on data relating to the nutrients taken from fluid surrounding the embryo;
- new culture media containing specialised nutrients to assist treatment outcomes in older women;
- new protocols to improve the biopsy and success rates of pre-implantation genetic screening; and
- participation in an Australia-wide study to better understand the role of growth hormone in patients with low ovarian reserve.

through good lifestyle choices including diet and exercise

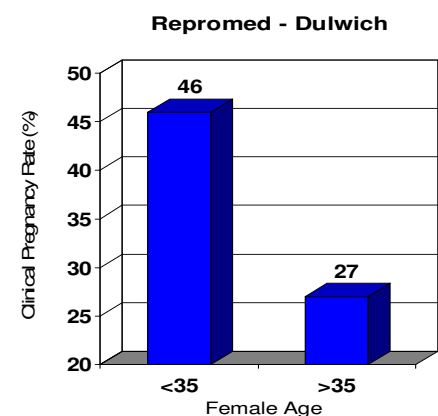
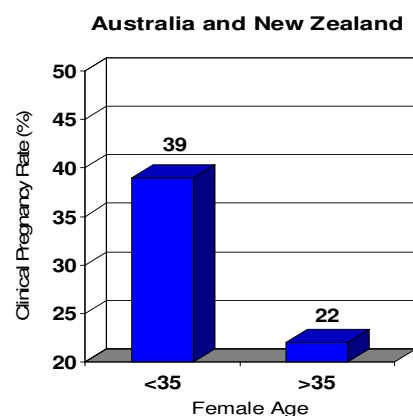
Achieving outstanding success rates from IVF

Repromed's results are routinely in the top ten Australian units for live births from both fresh and frozen embryo transfers in IVF.

There are now 70 ART units in Australia.

A good way of seeing how we perform is to compare our pregnancy success rates with the Australian and New Zealand Assisted Reproduction Database (ANZARD) latest report.

ANZARD is the collaborative facility involving the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's National Perinatal Statistics Unit and all fertility centres in Australia and New Zealand.



Gaining support from relatives and friends

People experiencing infertility problems can often feel isolated from family members and friends, particularly when conversations turn to children.

Understanding the feelings of people striving for parenthood and embarking on assisted conception is important, particularly when confronted by the ups and downs of treatment.

Support can come in many ways. Foremost is an appreciation of the medical and emotional aspects of infertility.

Infertility affects one in six couples of reproductive age, and it is most simply defined as the inability to conceive after a year of unprotected intercourse. The causes can be complex and are shared equally between male and female partners, with about 20 per cent of cases representing a joint problem or unknown causes.

In most cases, there is a known medical reason. Treatments may be physically and emotionally confronting and financially challenging.



It is common for anxiety and grief to be associated with diagnosis of infertility and treatment. While success rates are high and improving all the time, a positive outcome is not guaranteed.

Repromed's highly trained counsellors are available to help couples along their treatment journey.

Relatives and friends can also play a vital supporting role.

Katrina Burgess, Repromed's Coordinator of Counselling Services, said occasions of

traditional family gatherings - such as Christmas Day, Mother's Day or Father's Day or birthdays - could be difficult for couples experiencing infertility.

"Try to understand the feelings of those experiencing problems, and try not to be judgemental or give unsolicited advice about how to achieve a pregnancy," Katrina said.

"Most people are glad for others who are pregnant or have children, but remember it can also be painful to talk about it. Be sensitive about what you say."

Lifestyle program to help optimise chances of pregnancy

Repromed provides lifestyle advice and structured programs to optimise your chances of a successful pregnancy.

The focus is on informing, educating and motivating couples in healthy lifestyle choices to enhance conception.

"Many factors influence fertility, and if you are planning a pregnancy it is best to prepare well to maximise the chance of a positive and healthy outcome," said Dr Richard Henshaw, Repromed's Medical Director.

A series of lifestyle seminars will be held at Repromed's Dulwich unit during 2010 with topics including:

- preparing for pregnancy - general health, nutrition and immunisation;
- diet ;
- weight control options;
- exercise;
- lifestyle choices;
- stress reduction and well being strategies.

Details of the seminar program will appear on the Repromed website www.repromed.com.au

Repromed has also produced a helpful brochure on preparing for pregnancy.

The brochure provides guidance about issues including folate supplementation, immunisation, weight management, smoking and alcohol consumption, fertility and phases of the menstrual cycle.

The Repromed website - www.repromed.com.au - also features a program to help couples assess their fertility.

repromed Your dream is our goal

www.repromed.com.au

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