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Infertile Men Have Substantially Higher Rates of Testis Cancer

Study explains how male infertility is a “risk factor” for diseases in later life

San Francisco, CA – February 24, 2009 – Findings from a new study in the current issue of [The Archives of Internal Medicine](#) confirm for the first time in a large U.S. study that testicular cancer risk is higher among men with a history of infertility in the past, compared to the general population. Previous research on this topic was reported mainly from European countries with a much higher prevalence of testis cancer in the male population.

In men with testicular cancer, the risk of infertility during or after cancer treatment has been well known. But, other than such close associations with major medical illnesses such as cancer, doctors have generally thought the majority of male infertility is an isolated event - not really a medical illness.

Study Methodology

The study recruited 43,404 U.S. couples evaluated for infertility from 1965 to 1998 from 15 California infertility centers. Information on the male partners was linked to the California Cancer Registry (CCR). Men with cancer that preceded infertility were excluded from the study. The incidence of testicular cancer was compared to the incidence in an age-matched sample of men from the general population using [The](#)

[Surveillance Epidemiology and End Results \(SEER\) Program](#) of the National Cancer Institute. In the infertility cohort, 44 post-infertility cases of testicular cancer were identified. Overall, men from couples with infertility were 1.7 times more likely to develop cancer than other men. Among men in whom the infertility was known to be due to the male partner, the risk of developing testicular cancer was markedly higher (3.6 times) than the general population. Even when the calculation was adjusted for age, duration of treatment, and treatment facility, men with male factor infertility had 2.7 times the hazard of developing testicular cancer.

“Male infertility is clearly not as benign a condition for men’s future health as once thought,” says [Dr. Paul Turek](#), a urologist and Director of The Turek Clinic in San Francisco, who was senior author on the study.

Even more interesting is the issue of what common features may lead to this association of past male infertility and future testis cancer. Dr. Turek’s prior scientific research has shown that severely infertile men with no sperm in ejaculate can demonstrate abnormalities of DNA repair, a finding that has known associations with cancer development in both humans and animal models. “We should begin to think of infertility as a window into men’s health,” says Dr. Turek. “We suspect that infertile men are at higher risk of other cancers such as colon, melanoma and even prostate cancer. Future research will clarify this point.”

Research colleagues on this paper include Thomas Walsh MD, MS, Assistant Professor of Urology at the University of Washington, and Michael Schembri BS, June Chan ScD, and Mary Croughan Ph.D from the University of California, San Francisco.

About The Turek Clinic

The Turek Clinic is a next-generation men's healthcare medical practice specializing in issues facing reproductive age men, including male infertility, vasectomies, vasectomy reversal, varicocele repair, and other minimally invasive procedures. The practice was founded by [Dr. Paul Turek](#), a leading surgeon and former endowed chair professor at the University of California San Francisco in May, 2008. Dr. Turek's work combines innovative and cutting edge techniques with the wisdom of old-world medicine to treat and solve the problems of men ages 21 to 55 years of age. For more information visit www.TheTurekClinic.com.