

Assessment and Treatment of Couples with Fertility Problems

Version	Date	Reviewer	Comment
1	30/11/2017	NBT / UHB / BNSSG CCG	First version
2	01/12/2017	Gill Ryan	External document agreed with Fertility consultants at NBT and UHB
3	15/12/2017	Gill Ryan	Amended to reflect agreement (lost in formatting) that GPs could refer to fertility service at UHB, NBT or RUH (pages 2 and 3) and Bath Fertility / RUH reflected on single line in table on page 3 for clarity (at RUH request)
4	30/01/2018	IFR Team	Administrative changes
5	04/05/2018	IFR Team	Changes to services provided by BCRM and additional provider information.
5.01	04/05/2018	IFR Team	To correct additional provider info.

North Bristol NHS Trust & University Hospitals Bristol NHS Trust
In collaboration with BNSSG CCGs

Guidance for General Practitioners

Assessment and treatment of Couples with Fertility Problems

Introduction

Whilst criteria apply to fertility treatments, it is appropriate for all people experiencing fertility problems to be investigated and, if necessary, referred to a specialist with an interest in fertility so that they can have more complex investigations and be informed as to the causes of their fertility problems. This will allow them to decide on the options they may wish to pursue.

Prior to referral

Simple investigations in primary care should be undertaken if a couple are recognized as having an identified problem, regardless of the period of infertility. A full history and examination of both partners is recommended. It is important to cover a sexual history and testicular problems in the male. Social factors such as alcohol and smoking should also be noted. There may also be certain factors which merit early referral to a specialist unit such as lack of periods (Amenorrhoea) or absent sperm (Azoospermia).

Assessment in primary care

Many couples presenting with a delay in conception of 1 year duration may only need simple investigations and reassurance (see algorithm). The following are the only necessary routine investigations:

Female Partner

- FSH, LH and Estradiol (taken on day 1-4 of menstrual cycle)
- Full blood count
- Rubella status
- Chlamydia serology
- Serum progesterone (Mid luteal i.e. 7 days prior to expected menstruation)
- Prolactin (in women with irregular periods)
- TSH

Male Partner

- Semen analyses (one test is adequate if normal, a second test is required if the first is abnormal which should be at least 3 months apart).

If all of the above (history, examination and investigation of both partners) are normal, and the period of infertility is less than 24 months, referral can be deferred until then, unless where the prospective mother will be older than 18 weeks before her 40th birthday.

Referral

Patients seeking further investigation and treatment for their fertility problems should be referred to any of the following clinics:

- NBT General Fertility Clinic, Southmead Hospital
- Reproductive Medicine Clinic, St. Michael's Hospital
- Gynae - Reproductive Medicine, RUH, Bath

To enable appropriate referrals please ensure the patients fulfill the BNSSG eligibility criteria under the latest [Fertility Assessment and Treatment Policy](#) available from the CCG website.

Please also complete the specialist [Fertility Assessment Referral Form](#).

Patients who require assisted conception treatment such as IVF:

Patients requiring NHS funded specialist infertility treatment such as IVF, who meet the eligibility criteria, must be referred for treatment by an NHS Gynaecology consultant/ specialist using the "Fertility Treatment Funding Application Form" available from their CCG website.

The Fertility Treatment provider of the patient's choice will be sent the referral form and a summary of test results.

Details of funded NHS fertility services for BNSSG patients	Assessment including laparoscopy	Semen analysis	Treatment including surgery and clomifene	Ovulation induction and monitoring	Assisted conception e.g. IVF/ ICSI/ IUI	IVF lab in Bristol/Bath
Reproductive Medicine Clinic, St. Michael's Hospital	✓		✓	✓	IUI	
Southmead General Fertility Clinic, North Bristol NHS Trust (NBT) (located in BCRM)	✓		✓	✓		
Bristol Centre for Reproductive Medicine (BCRM)		✓			✓	✓ BRISTOL
Bath Fertility Centre (which also hosts the NHS Reproductive Medicine Service on behalf of the RUH)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Create Fertility, Bristol		✓			✓	✓
London Women's Clinic (Cardiff) Bristol satellite		✓			✓	
Fertility Exeter					✓	
The Centre for Reproductive & Genetic Health, London		Expected in Bristol from Sep 2018			✓	Expected in Bristol from Sep 2018

GP GUIDANCE ALGORITHM

Check:

- Confirm ovulation (progesterone)
- Ensure BMI normal (>18, <30) advise on weight as appropriate
- Advise on folic acid, smoking and alcohol
- Advise regular intercourse 2 or 3 times a week.
- Undertake tests including semen analysis

If normal reassure and advise couple try further (for up to 2 years - unless where the prospective mother will be older than 18 weeks before her 40th birthday)

Significant Abnormality (e.g. amenorrhoea, azoospermia, tubal blockage)
Or ≥2 years infertility

Referral to NHS fertility clinic:
Southmead Fertility Clinic
St. Michael's Fertility Clinic
RUH, Bath Reproductive Medicine Clinic

1. **Confirm couple fulfill referral eligibility criteria (or consider IFR)**
2. **Complete referral form to specialist fertility clinic**
3. **Please arrange that test results are available for the following:**

Female partner: FSH, LH and Estradiol (taken on day 2-5 of menstrual cycle), FBC, Prolactin (in women with irregular periods), TSH, HIV, Hepatitis B & C, Syphilis, Rubella and Chlamydia serology

Male partner: Semen analysis, HIV, Hepatitis B & C, Syphilis