

Template Policy

Template Policy:	2013-02: Surgical sperm retrieval
Issue Date:	October 2015
Review Date:	October 2017
<p>Recommendation:</p> <p>The Brighton & Hove Assisted Reproductive Technologies Policy & Commissioning Group (ARTPCG) has considered up to date information on current guidance and legislation, a review of the literature, an assessment of the baseline position, views and opinions of stakeholders, equality assessment, and the impact of policy changes on patients and the wider population. Taking these into account, the Group recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible couples where the male has obstructive azoospermia will have one surgical sperm retrieval procedure funded • In order to access NHS funded surgical sperm retrieval, couples will be required to fulfill all eligibility criteria set out in <i>Template Criteria for NHS Funded Assisted Reproductive Technologies</i> (BHCCG, 2015) • Surgical sperm retrieval will not be available if sub-fertility is the result of sterilisation^Δ • Where the procedure is successful, couples can access IVF with ICSI, in line with the relevant policy • Cryopreservation of surgically retrieved sperm will be funded for a maximum of two years <p>See overleaf for details of supporting evidence and rationale.</p> <p>NHS Brighton & Hove Clinical Commissioning Group will always consider appropriate individual funding requests (IFRs) through its IFR process.</p>	

Supporting documents

KMCS Health Policy Support Unit (2013) *Assisted reproductive technologies – Final report*

KMCS Health Policy Support Unit (2013) *Template Criteria for NHS Funded Assisted Reproductive Technologies – Amended BHCCG 2015*

NICE (2013) *Clinical guideline 156 – Fertility: Assessment and treatment for people with fertility problems*, Online: <http://www.nice.org.uk/cg156>

^Δ Where patients have consented to sterilisation

Key findings and rationale

What is surgical sperm retrieval?

Surgical sperm retrieval is a set of techniques for collecting sperm from within the male reproductive organs for use in intra-cytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI). ICSI involves an embryologist selecting a single sperm from the sample and injecting it directly into an egg. The fertilised egg (embryo) is then transferred to the woman's womb. The development of ICSI means that as long as some sperm can be obtained (even in very low numbers), fertilisation is possible.

What are the indications for surgical sperm retrieval?

Surgical sperm retrieval is indicated in cases of male sub-fertility where there is testicular sperm production but an absence of sperm in the semen (azoospermia).

What national guidance exists on fertility?

In February 2013 NICE issued Clinical Guideline 156 (CG156), *Fertility: assessment and treatment for people with fertility problems*. This replaces Clinical Guideline 11 (CG11), which was issued in February 2004. The aim of updating NICE guidelines was to revise recommendations on selected topics in the light of new evidence and, where appropriate, make new recommendations. In addition, the scope of CG156 was wider in terms of the patient groups considered.

What does NICE currently recommend with regard to NHS provision of surgical sperm retrieval?

NICE CG156 recommends surgical sperm recovery before ICSI may be performed using several different techniques depending on the pathology and wishes of the man. In all cases, facilities for cryopreservation of spermatozoa should be available.

Why is NHS funded surgical sperm retrieval only available to Brighton & Hove patients with obstructive azoospermia?

The available evidence suggests that the success rate for surgical sperm retrieval is good for men with obstructive azoospermia (between 85% and 100% depending on the procedure). Success rates are lower for men with non-obstructive azoospermia (between 44% and 88% depending on procedure). Furthermore studies have found that outcomes of ICSI using testicular sperm from men with non-obstructive azoospermia are generally inferior compared to those with obstructive azoospermia.

What are the eligibility criteria for access to surgical sperm retrieval?

In order to access NHS funded treatment patients will be required to fulfil all eligibility criteria set out in *Template Criteria for NHS Funded Assisted Reproductive Technologies* (KMCS HPSU, 2013) prior to accessing surgical sperm retrieval **and** prior to ICSI using surgically retrieved sperm.

Why are eligibility criteria in place for access to assisted reproductive technologies?

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) have put in place eligibility criteria for access to assisted reproductive technologies in order to focus resources on groups of patients most likely to have successful outcomes, and prioritise groups of patients who are most likely to have the greatest need.