

Male Reproductive Health

by **The American Fertility Association**

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To our readers:

The American Fertility Association (The AFA) and Men's Health Network (MHN) have joined forces to disseminate monthly articles about Male Reproductive Health. As you'll read in the introduction from Dr. Ajay Nangia and Dr. Stanton Honig, below, the articles are being generated from a collaborative organization called MRHA - the Male Reproductive Health Alliance, of which The AFA and MHN are founding members.

The articles will be housed on both our websites, so that they can be conveniently referenced at any time. It is our sincere hope that they will stimulate a conversation about the critical state of men's health overall, and reproductive health in particular, and lead to significant improvements.

We welcome your input and participation.

With our best regards,

Vice President

Men's Health Network

Ken Mosesian

Executive Director

The American Fertility Association

Introduction to Male Reproductive Health

Welcome to the monthly series of reviews on Male Reproductive Health!

Male health has been an area of medicine that has been ignored by patients, their partners, legislative organizations, targeted health awareness and education campaigns, and others.

Despite the proverbial "male dominant world", the issue of men's health has lagged several years behind the very active and public face of women's health that has championed issues from the birth control pill to breast cancer prevention, detection, and treatment. Other than prostate cancer awareness, and issues with

sexual dysfunction, testicular cancer awareness has recently increased due to sports stars such as Lance Armstrong and Scott Hamilton speaking out about their battles with the disease. However, the issue of men's health needs to be addressed from an early age as does the overall resistance by men to "taking care of themselves" regarding their health as they age. Men's access to healthcare and prevention seeking behavior continues to lag behind that of their female counterparts.

The Male Reproductive Health Alliance (MRHA) was convened by The American Fertility Association (The AFA), in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), The Society for the Study of Male Reproduction (SSMR) - a specialty sub-society of the American Urological Association (AUA), and Men's Health Network (MHN), with the following mission:

"Our mission is to undertake a multi-disciplinary approach to improve men's reproductive health from adolescence onwards through surveillance, research, education and intervention in the clinical setting and in the community. We seek to understand the male reproductive health behavior and knowledge, attitudes and beliefs that lead to this behavior. This [understanding] will lead to development of best practices to prevent and screen health conditions that might affect by male reproductive health, or might be caused by it, and will facilitate a unified approach to public, provider and government awareness, education and action."

MRHA is committed to the promulgation of information to patients, physicians and other health care providers.

The era of a voice for men's health moved one step closer to a national forum with a landmark meeting organized by MRHA at CDC's Division of Reproductive Health in Atlanta titled: "Advancing Male Reproductive Health".

Nearly 100 stakeholders gathered to discuss the issue of scientific/clinical concerns to public awareness. The groups invited included numerous branches of the CDC; member groups of the MRHA, RESOLVE; the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM); Fertile Hope (part of the Lance Armstrong Foundation involved in for fertility preservation for cancer patients) and the American Society of Andrology.

The objectives of the meeting were to provide a greater understanding of the scope and nature of men's reproductive health; to identify gaps in health research, health care services and public health programs; and to identify future directions in collaboration of aspects in this field. Speakers discussed numerous aspects of male reproductive health including STD prevention, male contraception, mental health of the reproductive male and modifying lifestyle issue for men and their reproductive health.

MRHA is committed to improve public awareness and collaboration between the different branches of the CDC that study and collect data on males from

childhood to adulthood with a focus on male reproductive health. Additionally, the meeting resulted in the beginning of a mission to highlight the issues of men's reproductive health that can be taken to policymakers at all levels for further consideration as well as provide evidence and support for public awareness campaigns to improve the health and well-being of men and their families in this country.

Please enjoy this series of timely reviews on different topics that relate to Male Reproductive Health which will begin to roll out next month, and for at least 12 months thereafter.

The first three topics are:

- Sports and Male Infertility
- War and Male Genital Trauma
- The Anabolic Steroid Threat to Male Reproduction.

We look forward to providing informative reviews in this venue as an extension of the first meeting on Male Reproduction at CDC.

Sincerely,

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