

Press release: European Association of Urology

[Almost 1/3 of infertile men at increased risk of metabolic diseases as they age](#)

For immediate release; this paper will be presented Sat Mar 12, 2016 at 10.15 (CET) Munich

Men with fertility problems are at risk of metabolic diseases as they age, according to work being presented at the Annual Congress of the European Association of Urology in Munich*.

Around fifteen percent of all couples experience infertility, and in around half of these cases this is due to male infertility. Men with poor semen quality have been shown to have a decreased life expectancy, but the cause are unknown and no biochemical markers or prevention strategies have been developed. Now a group of Swedish researchers have measured the levels of sex hormones and other biochemical parameters in infertile men, and have shown that many of them are at risk of hypogonadism (low levels of sex hormones) as well as signs of metabolic disease and osteoporosis.

The group took 192 men with a low sperm count, who were attending the Reproductive Medicine Centre at Skåne University Hospital, Malmö, and compared them with 199 age-matched controls. They compared sex hormone levels between the groups, as well as other markers such as bone mineral density (which indicates risk of osteoporosis) and HbA1c (a biomarker for diabetes).

They found that one third of men under 50 with fertility problems, had biochemical signs of low sex hormone levels (e.g. low testosterone), which is known as hypogonadism. This was 7 times as common as amongst controls. These men also had low bone density – especially in men with low testosterone - leaving them at increased risk of fractures and osteoporosis. Hypogonadal men also showed biochemical signs of elevated glucose (with elevated HbA1c), and greater signs of insulin resistance – indicating a tendency towards diabetes.

According to study leader Dr Aleksander Giwercman (Skåne University Hospital, and Lund University, Malmö, Sweden):

“We found that a significant proportion of men from infertile couples show biochemical signs of hypogonadism. This may be affecting their fertility, but they can also serve as early warning signs for metabolic diseases in later life, such as osteoporosis or diabetes. We would recommend that levels of reproductive hormones should be checked in all men seeking advice for fertility problems. Those at risk of serious disease should be followed after the completion of fertility treatment”.

Commenting, Professor Jens Sønksen (Copenhagen) of the European Association of Urology Scientific Congress Office said:

“This study is very interesting, as is the question it poses; whether infertility in men below the age of 50 years might be used as a predictor for development of metabolic diseases including diabetes and osteoporosis later in life. There is a significant need for more studies in this field”.

This work has recently been published in the peer-reviewed journal Clinical Endocrinology See Notes for funding details.*

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Notes for Editors

**PLEASE MENTION THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF UROLOGY CONGRESS IN ANY STORY
RESULTING FROM THIS PRESS RELEASE**

Contacts

Dr Aleksander Giwercman aleksander.giwercman@med.lu.se

Professor Jens Sønksen jens@sonksen.dk

EAU Press Officer, Tom Parkhill: tom@parkhill.it telephone +39 349 238 8191

The 31st Annual EAU Congress takes place in Munich from 11th to 15th March. This is the largest and most important urology congress in Europe, with up to 13,000 expected to attend: eau16.org.

*The work is the subject of a recent publication in the peer-reviewed journal, Clinical Endocrinology, see: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cen.13038/full>

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