



The Scottish education project 'Your Future Fertility', funded by the Scottish government, began in 2012 and is the first of its kind in the country.

The project creates awareness by providing information to a range of organisations including colleges, universities, voluntary organisations, GPs, sexual health clinics and many more.

With fertility problems affecting 1 in 6 couples in Scotland we believe we need to empower young people to make informed choices by providing education surrounding all aspects of fertility. This should include factors which may affect their fertility in the future. Providing appropriate fertility information and statistics could help improve their chances of conceiving in the future.

At all of our events we provide evaluation forms and collate the results. These statistics confirm that very few female students are aware that their fertility declines rapidly by the time they are 35 - 37 years-old due to their egg reserves dwindling considerably in terms of numbers and quality.

A high number of students are unaware of the effects of smoking on sperm motility or how it can deplete ovarian reserve. Many are also unaware of the damage that can be caused by sexually transmitted diseases including chlamydia and gonorrhoea. Many are surprised to hear that a body mass index (BMI) of between 34 and 40 can result in a 23% to 43% less chance of achieving pregnancy compared to women with a BMI below 30.

We deliver the information in a way tailored to each group's needs and make it fun where appropriate - which we hope will help to get the key messages across and leave a lasting impression. Our reach is expanding each year and we now provide information to other healthcare professionals, including sexual health student nurses, and student midwives. Testimonials include:

*"The opportunity for my students to hear from two such passionate knowledgeable advocates for infertility care and support is not only inspiring but prepares these future midwives for the realities and complexities of clinical practice. They left the session with new and detailed knowledge regarding the physiological and legislative aspects of infertility delivered vicariously and sensitively by Norma as well as the emotional and psychological dimensions which were wonderfully articulated by Jackie. It was both an invaluable and engaging learning opportunity for our students and I look forward to welcoming both Norma and Jackie back in the future".*

During our visits to university and college fresher's and health event weeks we carried out surveys. Results from the 2015/16 survey of 625 students (69% female, 31% male) include:

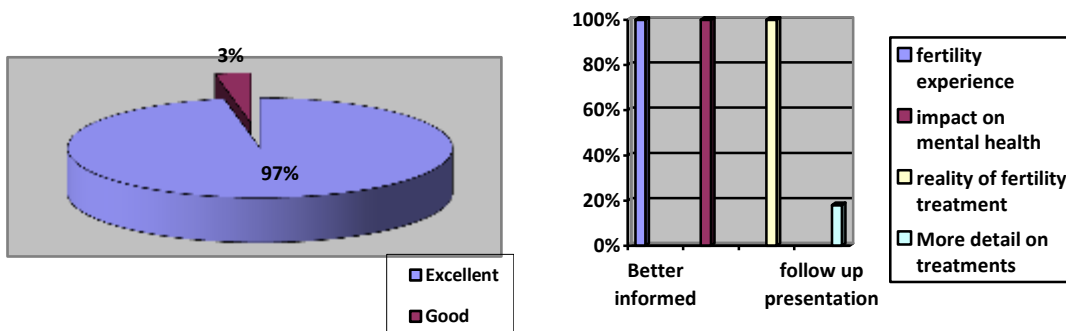
- 23% of the female students indicated they were aware of lifestyle issues that could affect fertility prior to discussions with I N Scotland staff:
  - Smoking 5%
  - Alcohol 5.5%
  - Illegal substances 4%
  - STI's 3%
  - Age 1%
  - Eating disorders 2%
  - Weight 2.5%

- 19% of male students said they were aware of lifestyle issues that could affect fertility prior to discussions with I N Scotland staff:
  - Smoking 3.5%
  - Alcohol 7%
  - Illegal substances 7%
  - STI's 0.5%
  - Age 0.5%
  - Steroid use 0.5%
- 99.5% of respondents indicated that they would give more consideration to present and ongoing lifestyle choices that could affect their future fertility after speaking with I N Scotland staff.

The age range of the students was: 47% aged 16-21, 38% aged 22-30 and 15% age 30 or over.

The presentations to student nurses and midwives were also evaluated (167 feedback forms). These results showed:

- 97% rated the information provided as excellent
- 3% rated the information provided as good
- 100% felt better informed about the patient experience
- 100% felt better informed about the impact of fertility problems on mental health
- 100% felt better informed about fertility treatments
- 18% would like a follow-up presentation on specific IVF treatments



Comments from the student health professionals included:

- *'statistics and facts raised my awareness'*
- *'personal stories put infertility into perspective'*
- *'the presentation made the fertility journey real'*
- *'great speakers, extremely useful information'*
- *'such an inspiring and emotional story'*

We offer presentations and interactive workshops to other voluntary organisations and to employers. Please get in touch if you think this would be beneficial for your organisation.