



This project commenced in July 2012 with the appointment of two part time Development workers based in the North East and South West of Scotland respectively. The project is to provide fertility information and education in universities, GPs and the workplace to ensure that people are better informed on fertility issues; how precious their fertility is; the impact of lifestyle choices on their fertility; how to take care of their fertility and how and when it declines.

We aim to reduce the instances of infertility through improved outcomes in terms of sexual health and lifestyle both of which can be factors in preserving fertility. In this respect, we would aim to raise awareness amongst young people in university of issues surrounding their fertility by educating them on what can impact on their fertility e.g. STD's and lifestyle choices and advise on how to protect their fertility.

Another part of the project is to help alleviate the effect on those already affected by this illness through information, self help and support. This has been done by helping to educate and support those currently facing fertility problems by providing information events throughout Scotland.

During 2016/2017 the project distributed approximately 6480 "your future fertility" leaflets which are aimed at giving an informative overview of lifestyle, eating disorders, age, weight, smoking, age etc. which are often issues many people do not consider until they discover they have a fertility problem.

Presentations have continued to be presented to GP surgeries, midwives, student nurses, Mental Health nurses, voluntary organisations and numerous universities, etc. The charity secured places and attended 31 university/college Fresher's and Health event weeks across Scotland giving presentations and supplying information. The project also attended the Fresher's event at the SECC with 12,000 students attending over the 2 day festival. Staff used interactive tools to help educate around future fertility and how to preserve your fertility with an emphasis on what can impact your future.

Over 2016/17 the project was externally evaluated by Graeme Reekie, Wren and Greyhound Limited of the project's outcomes and processes, with recommendations for its future efficiency and effectiveness. The evaluation was extremely positive [and can be viewed here:](#)

In 2016/2017 during Fresher's within the Universities and Colleges I N Scotland conducted a survey of student's knowledge of what could affect their future fertility:

To ensure the survey gave more detailed information about the participants whilst still allowing the survey to be anonymous participants were asked to indicate their age. 58% were aged 16 - 21, 30% were aged 22 - 30 and 12% were age 30 or over.

Overall results

Males Participated - 251

Prior to approaching the Fertility Network Scotland exhibiting area 80% participants indicated that they were not aware of lifestyle factors that may affect their future fertility. The remaining 20% indicated they were aware of the following factors:

- Smoking - 16 (6.3%)
- Alcohol - 21 (8.3%)
- Illegal substances - 11 (4.3%)
- STI's - 2 (0.7%)
- Age - 1 (0.4%)
- Steroid Use - 0 (0%)

Only (10) 4% of participants from the 251 males who took part indicated that they would not give more consideration to present and ongoing lifestyle choices they make which could affect their future fertility. 4 males did not answer the question.

237(94.5%) indicated they would give more consideration to present and ongoing lifestyle choices they make which could affect their future fertility.

Females Participated - 645

Prior to approaching the Fertility Network Scotland exhibiting area 503 (78%) participants indicated that they were not aware of lifestyle factors that may affect their future fertility. The remaining 142 (22%) indicated they were aware of the following factors:

- Smoking - 44 (6.8%)
- Alcohol - 53 (8.2%)
- Illegal Substances - 38 (5.9%)
- STI's - 14 (2.2%)
- Age - 2 (1.8%)
- Eating Disorders - 1 (0.1%)

Only 17 (2.64%) participants from the 645 Females who took part indicated that they would not give more consideration to present and ongoing lifestyle choices they make which could affect their future fertility.

619 (95.96%) indicated they would give more consideration to present and ongoing lifestyle choices they make which could affect their future fertility. 9 females did not answer this question.

Voluntary Organisations:

There were workshops presented to voluntary organisations who work with more vulnerable groups of young people. There were 42 education fertility workshop questionnaires returned with the following out comes:

- 89% rated the workshop as excellent
- 11% rated the workshop as good
- 100% felt they understood more about their fertility
- 100% felt they understood more about what affect i.e. illegal substances, binge drinking, anorexia, bulimia, age etc. could have on their future fertility.

Presentations to 20 GP Practices

- 98.5% rated the information provided as excellent
- 1.5% rated the information provided as good
- 100% felt better informed about infertility pathways
- 100% felt better informed about the impact of infertility on mental health
- 100% felt better informed of the current and updated criteria
- 100% felt better informed of the services offered by Fertility Network Scotland

We received many positive comments some of these are below:

- *"It would be good to be kept updated with any further changes"*
- *"Did not realise a couple could access treatment where one partner has no biological child"*
- *"Will refer patients for support to Fertility Network Scotland"*
- *"The information given is very informative and interesting and education is extremely important"*

Nurses and Midwives - 170 participants

- 97.5% rated the information provided as excellent
- 2.5% rated the information provided as good
- 100% felt better informed about the patient experience
- 100% felt better informed about the impact of infertility on mental health
- 100% felt better informed about infertility treatments.

We received many positive comments some of these are below:

- *"There is much more to accessing IVF treatment than I thought"*
- *"Excellent speaker, great information and facts"*
- *"Great to hear of the support that is available"*
- *"Personal story makes it all so real"*
- *"Great talk and educational going forward"*

The West of Scotland University filmed the presentations given to the students and requested permission to share this with other students throughout the year.

Throughout the year clinic patient evenings/days have been attended at numerous clinics including Aberdeen, Fife, Edinburgh, Dundee, Perth, Ayr, Crosshouse Hospital, Biggart, Dumfries, Girvan Hospitals etc.

Other events have also been attended with other voluntary organisations, local events, Patient participation forums, family planning clinics, the gathering, Health weeks, Science café and Sexual Health events.

We are grateful to the Scottish Government for their support.

Employers

Through our continued work with Unison and local authorities, 18 local authorities have implemented a fertility policy within their current medical policy with the remaining 14 boards agreeing at the STUC conference to have this implemented by July 2017.