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'Shattering myths about IVF, fertility and age': Fertility Network UK responds to HFEA's Fertility Trends report 2016

Aileen Feeney, chief executive of leading patient charity Fertility Network UK, said: 'It is encouraging to see the HFEA's Fertility Trends report (2014-2016) shattering myths about IVF, fertility and age. IVF is not the preserve of older women: according to the HFEA data, the average age of women having IVF in the UK is just 35.5 - considering couples will have been trying to conceive for several years prior to beginning IVF that means, on average, women having fertility treatment started trying for a baby in their early 30s.

It's also clear that fertility is firmly a male issue too: this data reveals male fertility problems are the most common reason for couples to seek IVF (37 per cent), with female fertility problems and unexplained problems representing 31 per cent and 32 per cent, respectively. What we need to see now is a greater focus on men: both support for men experiencing infertility and research into male fertility.

The HFEA's report also highlights a pressing need for improved fertility education on issues around fertility and age, and egg freezing. Given that fertility clinics do not accept donated eggs from women older than 35, Fertility Network UK is concerned to see that in 2016 the majority of women freezing their own eggs (68 per cent) were over 35. Are women being informed correctly about the optimum age to freeze their eggs?

Sadly, this latest Fertility Trends report again highlights that in the UK the majority of fertility treatment continues to be paid for privately (59 per cent); this will not change until the government steps in to stop disinvestment in NHS fertility services.'

ENDS

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1. Fertility Network UK provides practical and emotional support, authoritative information and advice for anyone experiencing fertility issues. The charity works to raise the profile and understanding of fertility issues and to push for timely and equitable provision of fertility treatment throughout the UK.

2. Fertility Network UK provides a free and impartial Support Line 0121 323 5025

3. Fertility Network UK supports people. We rely on voluntary donations to continue our vital work. You can donate now by visiting www.justgiving.com/infertilitynetwork