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Fertility Network UK partners with TFP Fertility on innovative male fertility project

National charity Fertility Network UK is delighted to announce an innovative partnership with leading fertility clinic TFP Fertility to increase awareness of male fertility and support for men on a fertility journey.

Sharon Martin, interim chief executive Fertility Network UK, said: ‘This partnership aims to break the silence surrounding male infertility and enable men to speak up about the impact a diagnosis of infertility has on their mental and emotional wellbeing, as well as help them navigate the support available.

All too often fertility is not seen as a male issue, despite male factor infertility being the most common reason for UK couples to seek fertility treatment. Working with TFP Fertility, we aim to challenge the myths and taboos around male fertility and foster an environment where men do not suffer in silence, or feel shame about their diagnosis, or isolated because of not knowing where to turn for support.

Mrs Martin added: ‘Fertility Network’s groundbreaking research investigating the impact of fertility problems on men revealed how infertility hits men hard – affecting their mental health, self-esteem, relationships, sex life, masculinity, career and finances. We know men hurt too when they cannot become parents; we hope our work with TFP Fertility will enable a shift from infertility being seen as a ‘women’s issue’ within society and improve support for men, in particular online.’

Justin Chu, Medical Director at TFP Fertility comments, “As leaders in fertility, we are continuously exploring innovative solutions to advance reproductive care. This includes research into how fertility clinics can better support men facing infertility. Through our partnership with Fertility Network UK, we are committed to enhancing every aspect of support for men, from counselling and support groups to treatments and raising awareness of common diagnoses.

“Thanks to advancements in technology, there is hope for men to overcome a variety of reproductive challenges and create their dream of starting families”.

Men, just as much as women, experience the pain and grief of struggling to become parents and feel the emotional and physical fall-out from fertility issues in other areas of their lives. However, the male perspective can often be overlooked or side-lined. There may be pressure to be ‘the strong one’ during fertility investigations and treatment. Men may also feel ‘powerless to help’ as, so often, it is their female partner who is undergoing the tests, or treatment and feeling the effects of fertility medications. Male fertility issues can be hugely isolating. Men don’t always find it easy to open up and talk about fertility problems with friends, family or colleagues – sadly, this means it can be very difficult to receive much-needed emotional support.

ENDS

For interviews and case studies, contact Dr Catherine Hill, communications manager media@fertilitynetworkuk.org 07469-660845

Notes to editors

1. The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority’s Fertility Trends report 2014-2016 revealed male infertility to be the most common reason for couples in the UK to seek IVF: 37% of couples sought treatment because of male factor problems; 31% because of female factor problems and 32% because of unexplained infertility or a mixture of male and female factor problems. https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/ivf-treatment-safer-more-available-and-more-successful-than-ever-before-report-suggests_uk_5aa8ffb2e4b001c8bf1574a6

2. In a 2015 survey commissioned by Fertility Network UK, in conjunction with Nuffield Health, 60 per cent of men who had experienced fertility issues revealed they had negatively impacted their relationship. One in three said fertility problems had a negative influence on their work life and 40 per cent felt they had an adverse effect on their mental health. This research was republished in <https://www.britishjournalofnursing.com/content/male-infertility/mens-perception-and-understanding-of-male-factor-infertility-in-the-uk>

3. Men’s experiences of infertility: a 2017 report co-produced by Fertility Network UK and Leeds Beckett University <https://fertilitynetworkuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Report-on-Male-Fertility-Survey.pdf>

4. Fertility Network’s male only online support group HIMfertility meets on a monthly basis, details at <https://fertilitynetworkuk.org/male-fertility-group/> One user says: ‘The HIMfertility group is a safe, friendly and open space for men to share their thoughts, feelings and concerns about their own fertility journey. The group is set up in such a way



that if you just want to sit and listen you can... I found the HIMfertility support group allowed me to process my own experiences even more, while also sharing them with others... men need to know it's ok to talk about male infertility and they don't have to suffer in silence.'

5. Fertility Network UK provides practical and emotional support, 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. www.fertilitynetworkuk.org

6. Fertility Network UK supports people. We rely on voluntary donations to continue our vital work. You can donate now by visiting <https://fertilitynetworkuk.org/donate/>

About TFP Fertility

TFP Fertility is a leading fertility group with eight clinics across the UK and Northern Ireland, 200 clinicians and more than 30 years' experience helping individuals and couples to have the family they hoped for. Part of an international group of clinics, TFP Fertility has extensive resource and expertise and takes part in research to find new ways to improve success rates. The company promotes inclusivity and access to treatment and is passionate about creating an excellent fertility experience for everyone.

Patients are offered a tailored approach reflecting their personal preferences, as well as access to one of the widest ranges of scientifically backed treatments and procedures of any fertility provider in the UK. This includes Ovulation Induction, IVF/ICSI, IUI, Fertility Preservation, Surrogacy, as well as egg and sperm donation. Emotional and lifestyle support, such as nutrition, counselling, and wellbeing, is also offered.