

Groundbreaking male infertility test could 'bring hope to millions'

June 6 2011

A groundbreaking new test for male infertility, which will save time, money and heartache for couples around the world, has been developed at Queen's University Belfast.

The medical breakthrough, known as the SpermComet, has resulted from more than a decade's research by Professor Sheena Lewis, who leads the [Reproductive Medicine](#) research group at Queen's.

The SpermComet provides unique information that no other test offers. By measuring damaged DNA in individual sperm, it can predict the success of infertility treatments and fast-track couples to the treatment most likely to succeed, leading to significantly reduced waiting times and improved chances of conception.

Professor Lewis said: "One in six couples has difficulty in having a family. In 40 per cent of cases, the problems are related to the man.

"Until now, there have been few accurate ways of measuring a man's fertility. Traditionally, the diagnosis of [male infertility](#) has relied on semen analysis. This provides the basic information on which fertility specialists base their initial diagnosis. However, its clinical value in predicting [male fertility](#) or success with [infertility treatment](#) is limited, particularly if the semen analysis results are normal.

"The SpermComet test is so called because it looks just like a comet in the sky. The head of the 'Comet' is undamaged DNA and the tail is

damaged DNA. From the tail of the 'Comet' we can measure exactly the amount of damaged DNA in each individual sperm. Good quality sperm DNA is closely associated with getting pregnant and having a healthy baby, and the SpermComet Test is the most sensitive test available for sperm [DNA testing](#)."

Professor Lewis, in partnership with Queen's venture spinout company, QUBIS, has now set up a new company to market the test, which is already available through a number of fertility clinics in Glasgow, Dublin and Galway.

QUBIS Chief Executive Panos Lioulis said: "As the number of [infertile couples](#) across Europe continues to increase by around five per cent each year, the need for such a test has never been greater. The SpermComet is the most sensitive [test](#) available to help clinics tailor treatment specifically to the man's needs, bringing hope to millions of couples across the globe."

Provided by Queen's University Belfast

Citation: Groundbreaking male infertility test could 'bring hope to millions' (2011, June 6) retrieved 30 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-06-groundbreaking-male-infertility-millions.html>

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