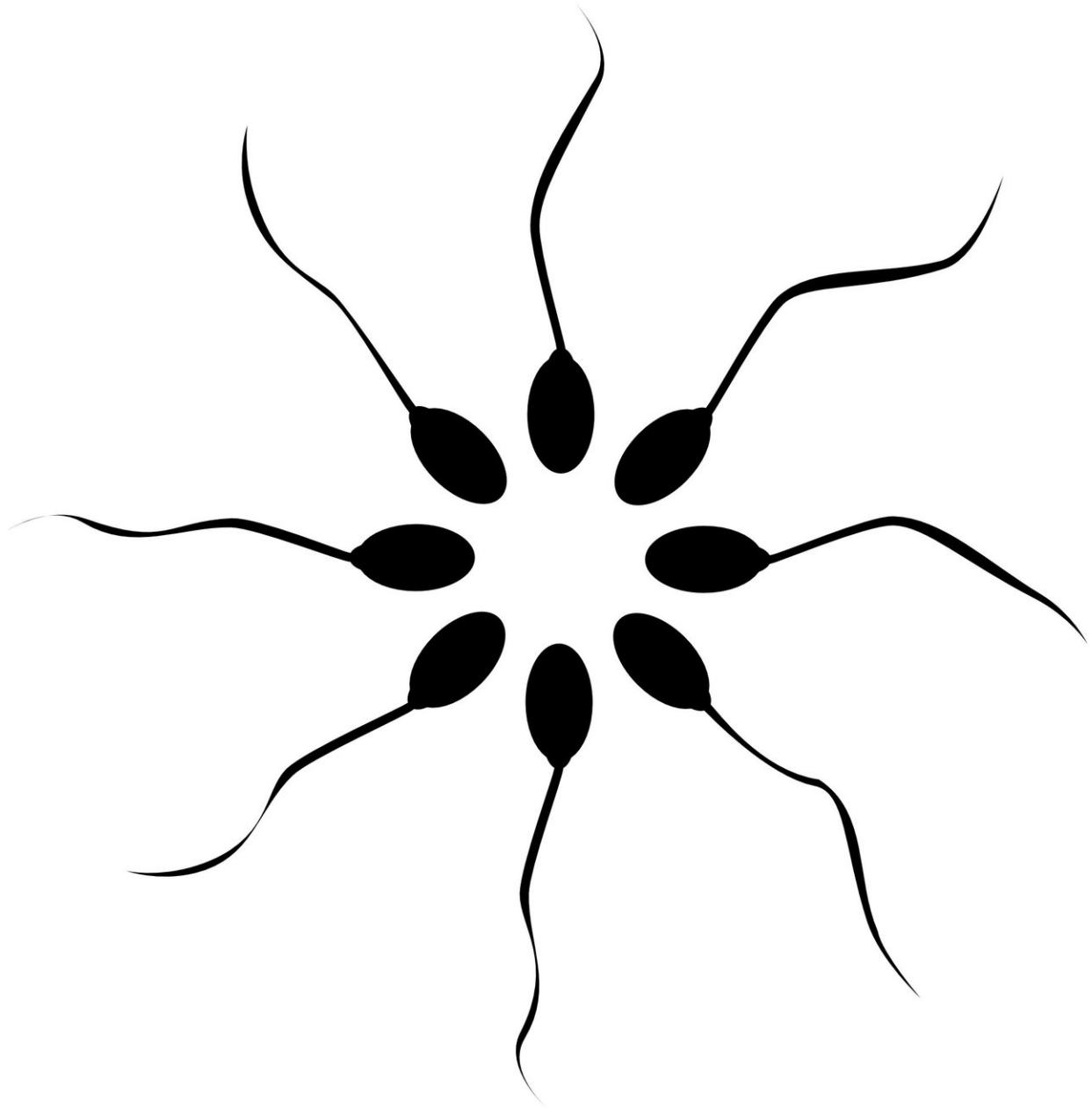


Prolonged stress can impact quality of sperm, study says

June 7 2018



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Prolonged stress, such as that experienced during military conflict, can have an adverse impact on sperm quality, according to a new study by researchers at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) and Soroka University Medical Center in Beer-Sheva, Israel.

The study, which was just presented at the International Summit on Assisted Reproduction and Genetics in Israel, indicated that more than a third (37 percent) of the sperm samples taken during a stressful period were found to have low sperm motility.

"Mental [stress](#) is known to have an adverse effect on fertility, but there is little research on the impact of stress on [sperm quality](#)," says Dr. Eliahu Levitas, a member of the Ben-Gurion University Faculty of Health Sciences and director of the IVF Unit at Soroka. "This study shows that prolonged stress can have an effect on sperm quality."

In general, the probability of weak motility in sperm samples taken during periods of prolonged stress was 47 percent higher. Weak motility makes it less likely that the sperm will successfully fertilize an egg.

The study included 10,536 samples donated during unstressful periods between 2009-2017, which were compared to 659 sperm samples taken during and up to two months after two military conflicts between Israel and Gaza in 2012 and 2014. The subjects' average age was 32, and 44 percent were smokers.

According to Dr. Levitas, who is also director of the Soroka Sperm Bank, "Our reasoning was that even men who heard incoming rocket

warning sirens during a [conflict](#) experienced stress throughout the day over a longer period. We were surprised to discover that there is a connection between the security situation and the [sperm](#) counts."

Provided by American Associates, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Citation: Prolonged stress can impact quality of sperm, study says (2018, June 7) retrieved 19 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-06-prolonged-stress-impact-quality-sperm.html>

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