

COVID and Sperm Donors

From the time it was identified there has been a question of the possibility of sexual transmission of SARS-Co V-2. COVID-19 caused by infection of an individual with SARS-Co V-2 is diagnosed through collection of a sample and analysis of the sample through real time RT-PCR.

Though an initial paper from Li et al. identified SARS-Co V-2-RNA in the semen of six patients, no other group has identified the virus in semen [1]. Several recent studies, including Burke et al. have demonstrated in both acute disease and convalescent phase that SARS-Co V-2 is not present in semen [2]. Burke et al. looked at a cohort of 18 men who were positive for COVID via RT-PCR [2]. Prior to this most recent publication, Holtmann et al. published a study in which they found no SARS-Co V-2 in the semen through RT-PCR studies [3]. Pan et al. published another study with a larger cohort of patients who were recovered from COVID-19 that showed no evidence of virus in their semen [4]. These studies were focused on detection of the virus in semen to determine if COVID-19 is sexually transmissible through semen, and though there is no evidence that COVID can be transmitted sexually through semen Fairfax Cryobank put deferral protocols in place for donors who had known exposures or who tested positive for SARS-Co V-2. Any illness, especially one that causes fever, can have a negative effect on the quality and health of a semen sample, therefore we made the decision to defer from donation for a period of time after a positive COVID test to ensure the best quality samples are collected.

Sperm donors complete screening questionnaires at every visit to the Fairfax Cryobank facility. This includes questions about their health and any symptoms of illness they are or have experienced since their last visit. We communicated with our donors, asked them to take all safety precautions and let our staff know if they had any symptoms or possible exposures to COVID. They were instructed not to come to our facility if they had any symptoms or exposures. Fairfax was able to put safety measures in place and follow all CDC recommendations when the pandemic started. We set up barriers, sanitizing stations, implemented mandatory masks, and set up contactless procedures for donor visits. As soon as the FDA issued guidance on screening donors, Fairfax implemented their specific questions. Fairfax Cryobank works closely with the [GIVF Molecular Infectious Disease Lab \(MIDL\)](#). As soon as there was a diagnostic test available, we implemented testing of our staff and donors.

Fairfax Cryobank remains committed to the health and safety of our recipients, donors, and staff. We have a long history of providing the best tested, highest quality donor sperm. Through the COVID pandemic we have continued this tradition by screening and testing our sperm donors to ensure their health and COVID-negative status as they continue to donate.

References

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- Pan F, Xiao X, et al. No evidence of severe acute respiratory syndrome–coronavirus 2 in semen of males recovering from coronavirus disease 2019. *Fertnstert.* 2020;113(6): P1135-9.