

MEN AND FERTILITY

THE UNTOLD STORY

August 2022

WHY DON'T
MEN TALK
ABOUT
FERTILITY?

MALE
FERTILITY
AND
CORPORATE
BENEFITS

FERTILITY
MEDICINE
AFTER COVID

OFFERING AN
EMPLOYEE
FERTILITY
BENEFIT

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Intro

Welcome to the Summer 2022 edition of Forming Families, the quarterly newsletter where ARC Fertility shines a light on important issues in healthcare, fertility, and family planning and building.

This summer, we wanted to focus on the sometimes overlooked and underreported subject of male fertility. Understandably, much of the attention regarding family focuses on women and mothers. Yet men and male-identifying parents also suffer from fertility issues. For many men, these circumstances are still stigmatized as sources of shame to be kept quiet and suffered through and are viewed as an embarrassment for the man and his family. As a result, men often go uninformed of fertility treatment options that could broaden their health, happiness, and family growth.

Our featured article is a Q&A with Dr. Paul J. Turek about why men tend not to seek help with fertility issues and how we can turn these attitudes around. Dr. Turek is not only a brilliant research scientist and recipient of multiple academic awards and honors, he is also a compassionate advocate for reproductive health, and an engaging writer whose ongoing blog explains male fertility issues in an approachable and clear voice. He understands just how damaging infertility can be to men and lays out great advice on how to move forward.

In this newsletter, we also advocate for companies to be sure and expand their fertility treatment benefits to include services for male employees. Many existing programs focus primarily or even exclusively on female patients, leaving out male employees or employees' male spouses. Addressing this disparity will help attract and retain the best talent. It is also the right thing to do for diversity and inclusion, as single dads, same-sex male couples, and trans and gender fluid individuals will all benefit. Moving into a hybrid workforce, employers should be especially cognizant of how attitudes around work and family are changing and be ready to serve new needs.

We close this issue with a look at three of the amazing fertility medicine practices working with ARC Fertility to provide the highest standard in family building medicine. Their caring and innovative doctors have made access to fertility treatment available to many types of families, and they are ready to help men overcome their fertility roadblocks and start their families.

Thank you for being part of the ARC Fertility family and for supporting our mission.



David Adamson, MD

Founder and CEO
ARC Fertility

Dr. Paul J. Turek on Why Men Don't Deal With Fertility

"Men don't see a doctor unless something is bleeding or broken," is a common saying and sadly describes a lot of male patients. When this attitude meets stigma and shame about infertility, many men avoid the diagnosis and its treatment. We caught up with Dr. Paul J. Turek to discuss the reasons men don't confront their fertility issues and how we can change this longstanding situation. Dr. Turek is an American surgeon and reproductive health specialist who has received a National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant for his research on using stem cells to help infertile men become fathers.

Why do many men who are having trouble starting a family avoid reproductive care?

The primary reason is stigma and stress about infertility. Men are under intense pressure to be "normal" and conform to traditional ideals of masculinity that includes continuing their family line. The idea of fatherhood is, well, sacred in many cultures. Few men have ever imagined or want to hear that they cannot impregnate their partner or otherwise conceive a child by "normal" means.

Can you describe some of the struggles men face after an infertility diagnosis?

It's one of the loneliest experiences a man can have. Men diagnosed with male infertility suffer sexual, social, and personal stress comparable to those diagnosed with cancer. The diagnosis is as taboo as with AIDS or syphilis and a terrible blow to one's sense of manhood, self-confidence, and sexual function. Most men grow up expecting and expected to have children, which makes infertility a "shameful" secret they keep from the rest of the world.

What is the most important thing men should know about infertility?

Two things are most important. Firstly, it's not your fault. So many men deal with guilt as well as shame over difficulties starting a family. Most likely the problem was caused by a genetic or unrelated medical issue. Even patients dealing with fertility issues due to an STD gain nothing by beating themselves up — and indeed only increase the stress of the treatment process. And that's the second and more important thing: there's hope. Treatments exist for most forms of male infertility, and I've had years of success helping men diagnosed with infertility become fathers.



How can men best overcome this reluctance to seek help for fertility issues?

To some degree I think we should reevaluate our priorities as men. Men — indeed, all adults — should have the courage to confront their problems and seek help. That courage is more important, and much healthier than living in shame and secrecy. But men need the loving support of their partners to overcome the stigma and seek help. A man dealing with infertility is unlikely to have leaned on his friends, so a partner may be the only person who knows, and thus their only source of support. Finally, men should remember that infertility neither defines nor condemns them and should keep doing the things that make them happy as they find the strength to seek professional aid in overcoming their fertility issues.



Male Fertility and Corporate Benefits

Even companies that offer family-forming benefits often use services that leave men underserved. But offering male fertility treatment is a great way to boost recruitment and retention, provide a more equitable workplace, and anticipate the needs of today's hybrid workforce.

For employers, embracing a comprehensive and progressive approach to male fertility is a great way to spur the recruitment and retention of the best available staff. Workers of all backgrounds and genders are looking for the best benefits available, and for many, these requirements include making comprehensive fertility coverage available if and when those employees decide to start a family. Companies that provide their staff with the best and most accessible benefits will attract the strongest candidates. These companies also make better use of their staff's expertise long-term, as higher retention rates mean greater ROI on training and developing employees.

Taking care of male employees' fertility needs is a great way to score top marks in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Traditional healthcare plans tend to focus primarily on women's fertility issues, thus excluding male employees and female employees' male partners. Moreover, this traditional approach also ignores the needs of prospective

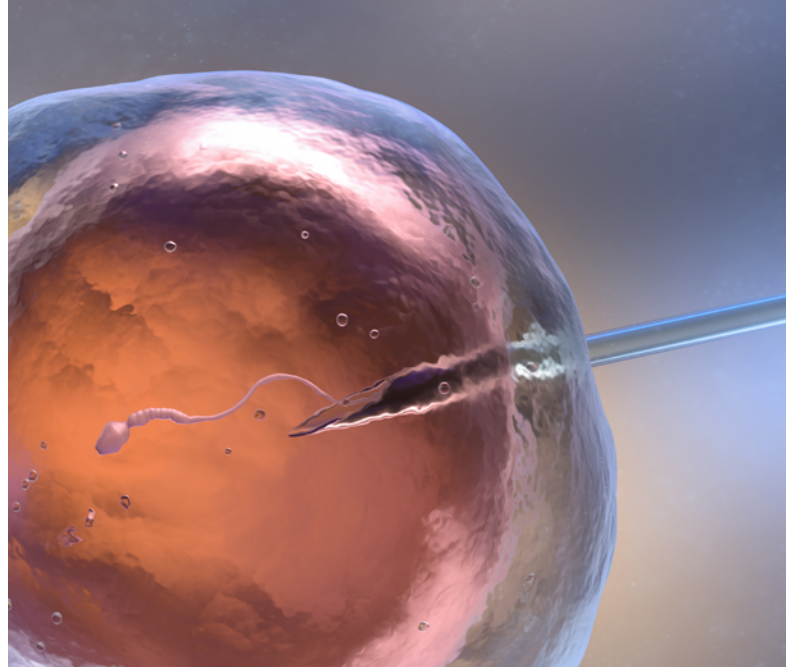
single fathers, men in same-sex relationships, and trans and gender-fluid individuals. And the next superstar hire who takes a company to new heights could come from any of these backgrounds. Like all equitable benefits, access to fertility care and treatments should be available equally to workers of all backgrounds.

In our post-COVID world of the hybrid workforce, equal opportunity family planning becomes an especially useful benefit to offer. Many workers who were holding off on having children due to busy commuting schedules are now pushing up their family building schedules as a work-from-home or hybrid model makes working while raising children more tenable. Many male employees are reevaluating their priorities and using a more flexible work schedule to focus more on their families. Companies that prioritize family forming benefits along with their staff will show a stronger understanding of the needs of male employees and the changing face of work and family.

For single men and men in same-sex couples, adoption is often an option. And while this often falls outside of the realm of what most people think of as "fertility," it is actually a critical part of how many men form their families. And companies that offer fertility benefit packages that cover adoption can position themselves as employers of choice, which helps them attract and retain top talent. Read Dr. David Adamson's latest article on this important topic in [Employee Benefits & Wellness Excellence](#).

On the Front Lines of Fertility Medicine

ARC Fertility is proud to work with some of the top fertility medical practices in the country. Here are some of the clinicians who are leading the way in helping Americans form their families.



Dr. Jim Thompson



Voted as Albuquerque's "#1 Top Fertility Doctor" for 17 consecutive years, Dr. Jim Thompson's training, experience, and most importantly, care for his patients, has resulted in the happy parents of babies born due to his hard work and dedication.

"We at The Fertility Center of NM have been working with ARC for decades. ARC provides our patients the opportunity to afford treatment. Without ARC, some patients might not be able to move forward with starting their family."



Dr. Ellen Goldstein



Dr. Ellen H. Goldstein is a Reproductive Endocrinologist with several fruitful years of experience. With a strong background in IVF and a relentless drive to excel by consistently attending international postgraduate courses in reproductive medicine, she has become a recognized expert in basic and advanced infertility.

"By partnering with ARC, our team at Beverly Hills Fertility is redoubling our efforts to ensure that our treatments are not only personalized and successful, but affordable. Infertility is already stressful enough; ARC can at least reduce the financial strain of treatment so that everyone who needs care can access it."



Dr. Collin Smikle



Dr. Collin Smikle is the founder and Medical Director of Laurel Fertility Care. Board certified in obstetrics and gynecology as well as reproductive endocrinology and infertility, he has extensive experience in IVF, all assisted reproductive technologies and advanced laparoscopic surgery. He is a highly respected physician, researcher, teacher and medical author.

"We are proud to partner with ARC Fertility. Their commitment to providing our patients with affordable financing options aligns with the Laurel Fertility Care mission to provide an inclusive personalized care approach."

FERTILITY BENEFITS

A Key to DEI

Offering your employees a way to grow their families is a great way to let the world know that your company is committed to the physical and emotional wellbeing of their teams. It is also a proven approach to attracting and retaining women, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and others who need assistance to bring children into their lives.



Employers are facing an increasingly competitive labor market. The unemployment rate is at 3.6%, which the Federal Reserve classifies as full employment. First-time jobless claims are at their lowest levels since 1970, while wages have steadily climbed over the past year. Companies are working harder to attract and retain quality employees, and higher pay is just one arrow in their quiver.

To entice and keep top-tier talent, many organizations have started offering, outside of traditional compensation plans, benefits which explicitly help employees start or expand their families.

Family-building benefits create significant goodwill between employers and employees because they show that a company is sensitive to its workforce's needs outside the workplace. Studies have shown that employees who use these benefits have increased loyalty to their employer, and even employees who never plan to use this coverage view them positively. These benefits typically cover treatments like in vitro fertilization (IVF), intrauterine insemination (IUI), adoption support services, fertility drug prescriptions, and surrogacy.

Build
employee
loyalty

Reduce staff
turnover

Become
an employer
of choice for
job seekers

Increase
diversity

For more information about ARC Fertility's Family Forming Benefits, please contact ARC directly at info@arcfertility.com or 888-990-2727.

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