

# Licence Committee Meeting

18 December 2006  
21 Bloomsbury Street London WC1B 3HF

## MINUTES Item 2

### Hartlepool General Hospital, 0031 Licence Renewal

#### Members:

Walter Merricks, Lay Member – Chair  
Neva Haites, Professor of Medical  
Genetics, University of Aberdeen  
(present via conference phone)  
Hossam Abdalla, Director of Lister  
Fertility Centre

#### In Attendance:

Frances Clift, Legal Adviser  
Marion Witton, Head of Inspection  
Claudia Lally, Committee Secretary

#### Observing:

Tahir Hussain, Inspector

#### Observing:

Sally Cheshire, Lay Member  
Sue Price, add job

Conflicts of Interest: members of the Committee declared that they had no conflicts of interest in relation to this item.

The following papers were considered by the Committee:

- papers for Licence Committee (37 pages)
- no papers were tabled.

1. The papers for this item were presented by Parvez Qureshi, HFEA Inspector. Mr Qureshi informed the Committee that the renewal inspection visit to this centre identified a number of improvements since the time of the last inspection. In particular, the centre has now split samples in accordance with Chair's letter CH(04)03, has updated its protocols, and employs its own in house ICSI practitioner. Patient feedback reviewed by the inspection team was largely positive. During the inspection, the Person Responsible indicated that the long-awaited merger with a nearby hospital is progressing well and the centre will soon be moving into a purpose-built unit. Another finding of the inspection visit was the centre's high level of counselling take-up, achieved by introducing prospective patients to the counsellor at a very early stage of treatment.

2. Mr Qureshi informed the Committee that the inspection report identified that a three embryo transfer had taken place to a woman under 40. The Committee noted that another such transfer had been reported at the previous inspection to the centre. However, the Committee took the view that the three embryo transfer had been conducted on the basis of a clinical judgement of the specific situation of the patient concerned. The Committee agreed to remind the centre of the guidance given in the Code of Practice:

- 8.20 In circumstances where women are using their own fresh or frozen eggs or embryos, centres are expected to ensure that:
  - (i) Women aged under 40 at the time of transfer receive no more than either two eggs or embryos in any one cycle, regardless of the procedure used.

The Committee also agreed to remind the centre that three embryo transfers will continue to be monitored at this and all other centres.

3. Mr Qureshi informed the Committee that the inspection report had also identified a number of areas for improvement. In particular, it identified that there has been an increase in the workload at the centre and that there needs to be a corresponding increase in staff numbers to alleviate the pressure experienced by centre staff. An expansion of the premises is also required to accommodate the extra treatment cycles being conducted. In addition, the inspection report identified the need for a patient feedback procedure and, in the laboratory, the need to monitor air quality, and to monitor carbon dioxide levels in the incubators. Other areas of improvement identified were the need to fully support CPD for centre staff, to implement formal multidisciplinary meetings and to amend laboratory protocols to ensure that embryos are not kept beyond the expiry of their consent period.

4. The Committee noted the improvements achieved by the centre, along with the additional improvements required in the inspection report. The Committee endorsed the recommendations of the inspection team and, taking the required improvements into account, decided to renew the centre's licence for a period of three years, with no additional conditions.

Signed..... Date.....  
Walter Merricks (Chair)