HFEA Clinic Focus – February 2016

Find out what's happening in the sector at our annual conference

Our annual conference takes place on Thursday 24 March in London. This year, we are focussing on the new Clinic Portal and website and on our 25th anniversary.

You will get the chance to see a preview of the new Clinic Portal and understand how it will be combined later in the year with services you use to submit data to us. You will also get a peek at the new website and Choose a Fertility Clinic tool, what data we'll be publishing for patients and how you can help us make a success of the new patient rating service.

The conference will also celebrate our 25th birthday, with a panel discussion reflecting on the great developments we as a sector have made in providing high quality care for patients, donors and the families created by assisted conception.

Finally, we will be launching the 2016 fertility trends report and Sally Cheshire will be talking through the key figures. Though we will be hosting this years' conference in a new venue, the ever popular market place will be making a return, giving you the opportunity to meet our Authority members and exhibitors.

The conference can be used by members of the ACE CPD scheme to claim one point per hour for the duration of the conference excluding refreshment breaks.

Implementation of the EU directives on imports and coding

Last year we informed you about the two new EU directives on imports and coding that are coming into force in April 2017, and what they might mean for your centre.

The first directive concerns importing eggs, sperm and embryos into the EU and the second concerns applying a single European code to all tissues and cells being transported within the EU.

This article updates you on the progress of this directive, and how you can have your say on how these directives are implemented.

Read more

Zika virus - what it means for donors and fertility patients

The recent concerns about the Zika virus means centres should be extra vigilant when considering people for fertility treatment of gamete donation.

The virus is principally transmitted by mosquitos but there also appears to be a risk of sexual transmission.

Whilst the situation is still evolving and given the potentially significant consequences for a pregnancy if Zika is transmitted via the sperm, you should ask donors about recent travel. You should additionally ask couples embarking on fertility treatment if they have recently travelled from infected areas.
We advise recording this information clearly in their clinic notes as our inspectors will monitor this as part of their checks that centres are acting on guidance issued by us and/or professional bodies.

Read on for a list of relevant issues and recommended actions.

What happened at our Authority meeting

Our latest Authority meeting was held on January 20 and began with our Chair saying goodbye to clinical geneticist Dr Sue Price, who is stepping down as a member after 10 years service. Sue will be replaced by Dr Anne Lampe.

Our chair welcomed Ruth Wilde to her first meeting of the Authority. Ruth joins us as a professional member and brings years of experience in fertility counselling and strong connections with BICA and BFS.

The Authority heard the excellent news that the IfQ programme has passed the assessment from the Department of Health and got approval from the Government Digital Service to proceed to the ‘beta’ stage of the programme. There were updates on the revisions of the IfQ timeline which means we are now working towards a June release date for the new website, Clinic Portal and Choose a Fertility Clinic (CaFC) rather than March.

A paper was presented which put forward a proposal as to whether embryos could be tested for more than one condition at a time. After lengthy debate the Authority agreed to testing for more than one condition under PGD at a time where patients are at particular risk for one condition.

There were also updates on the applications to use register data for epidemiology studies and Government initiatives around better regulation.

Important update regarding our recent Auditors survey on incidents

We would like to thank those who took the time to complete our survey on incidents that we ran in the October edition of Clinic Focus.

Unfortunately due to the low response rate to the survey we are unable to share back meaningful data with the sector.