

FERTILITY MANAGEMENT IN COUPLES WITH HIV. CAN SEMEN WASHING BE PROPOSED AS A RISK REDUCTION METHOD FOR AFRICAN HIV DISCORDANT COUPLES WISHING TO CONCEIVE?

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Introduction: In Europe and USA sperm processing to eliminate infectious HIV from the ejaculate of HIV-positive men has provided the possibility to father uninfected children while protecting the woman from infection. In non European regions (including Africa and Southeast Asia), the epidemiological picture is substantially different, as well as the amount of medical resources which can be applied to implement prevention programmes.

Methods: To assess the profile of safety and efficacy of sperm washing in HIV discordant couples, two vast retrospective studies were conducted. The first evaluated the original cohort of couples treated in the pioneering centre in Italy and the second on couples treated in eight European centres.

Results: In the above studies data was collected on 1048 couples and 3396 assisted conception treatment cycles. No cases of HIV infection were noted independent of male viral load and antiretroviral treatment history. Success rates for insemination were similar to natural conception and for ART similar to success rates in infertile couples.

Discussion: Sperm washing followed by ART has shown in safety and effectiveness in European couples. The clinical program for HIV discordant couples can be further simplified and adapted to other settings.

