

# Preface

Male infertility is a common problem and is encountered in isolation or in conjunction with female reproductive problems in more than 50% of infertile couples. In spite of this large prevalence, the provision for specialist health care to address a male's reproductive problems remains inadequate compared to his female partner. This anomaly has led to a situation where semen analysis has become the only arbitrator to offer expensive assisted reproductive procedures. Doctors are quick to advise in vitro fertilization and intracytoplasmic sperm injection procedures whenever the results of semen analysis are suboptimal without offering additional tests to identify potential reversible causes for the suboptimal result. Consequently, many men proceed to assisted conception without being fully evaluated even when they have severe but correctable forms of male infertility. However, the field of andrology has been evolving over the past 30 years, which has led to a better characterization of reproductive problems in the male. This has been driven by the belief that men are entitled to know the cause of their reproductive impediment whenever possible. Moreover, the sound clinical diagnosis facilitates medical and surgical therapies specific to these reproductive problems. Even if the treatment to enhance sperm quality does not result in spontaneous pregnancy, the improvement in sperm quality may by itself have a positive impact on the outcome of assisted reproductive techniques. Moreover, the careful diagnosis of the genetic causes of male infertility, such as cystic fibrosis, promotes safer assisted conception.

Our book is organized as a case-based clinical guide to all clinicians involved in managing male reproductive problems, including andrologists, urologists, reproductive endocrinologists, gynaecologists with subspecialist interested in andrology, and their trainees and specialist nurses. We chose the case-based learning approach for the book to support the expanding interest in andrology by presenting the most up-to-date clinical views on assessing and managing fertility impediments in the male. We also feel that ours is a timely book that aids many of us to address the needs of more discerning men wanting to find out the root cause of their infertility and at the same time to meet the demands of health systems driving for more efficient and safe assisted conception technology.

The first two chapters focus on the clinical evaluation of the male fertility potential. The chapter on semen analysis is written in a non-conventional way to drive us away from the mechanistic approach of judging the result, deepening our understanding of the necessity and the limitation of this basic investigative tool. Each subsequent chapter addresses a well-defined clinical problem with pertinent clinical scenarios to promote the clinical relevance of the material presented. We avoid excessive theoretical details to allow enough space for helpful clinical discussion and the sharing of clinical experience in its diversity.

We are grateful to our contributors, who are distinguished leaders in the field with extensive clinical experience from both sides of the Atlantic and the Middle East. The chapters offer us the opportunity to expand our knowledge by comparing our practice and procedures with those from other parts of the world.

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We genuinely hope that this volume will support and enrich your clinical practice in clinical andrology.

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A Case-Based Guide for Clinicians

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