

Welcome to the May 2007 edition of ACCESS eNews.



This month:

1. IVF funding gives hope to battlers
2. ACCESS at the United Nations
3. Fertility treatment may 'reduce sperm in offspring'
4. Opinion: sensitivity, childlessness and Bill Heffernan
5. RTAC visits – are they coming to your clinic?
6. Rising diabetes may lead to male infertility
7. Stem cell bill passes through Victorian government
8. DES and cancer

... also upcoming events and recent news articles of interest to those who have difficulties conceiving.

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## 1. IVF funding gives hope to battlers

Medicare funding for treatment has expanded, with the introduction of subsidies for a number of male infertility treatments, including sperm aspiration and intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI). For the full story, please visit:

<http://www.news.com.au/story/0,23599,21656940-2,00.html>

Sandra Dill went to Canberra on Budget night to thank the Prime Minister for the ICSI item number.



## 2. ACCESS at the United Nations

ACCESS CEO and IAPO Board member, Sandra Dill was a speaker at a joint meeting of the United Nations' NGO Health Committee and the International Alliance of Patients' Organizations (IAPO).

The meeting was held in New York in late April, to introduce a vital voice and concept to healthcare worldwide: that of the patient and patient-centered healthcare. ACCESS is a full member of IAPO.

To achieve patient-centred healthcare IAPO believes that healthcare must be based on the following Five Principles:

1. Respect
2. Choice and empowerment
3. Patient involvement in health policy
4. Access and support
5. Information

To achieve patient-centred healthcare at every level in every community, IAPO has called for the support and collaboration of policy-makers, health professionals, service providers, and health-related industries to endorse these Five Principles and to make them the centre of their policies and practice.

See the Declaration at:

<http://www.patientsorganizations.org/showarticle.pl?id=31&n=3714>

The UN Meeting presented a Declaration on Patient-Centered Healthcare to which hundreds of patients' organisations worldwide are signatories, including ACCESS Australia and the iCSi patient leader network.

IAPO is a unique global alliance representing patients of all nationalities across all disease areas and promoting patient-centred healthcare around the world. Members are patients' organisations working at the international, regional, national and local levels to represent and support patients, their families and carers. A patient is a person with any chronic disease, illness, syndrome, impairment or disability.

IAPO's vision is that patients throughout the world are at the centre of healthcare.

### **3. Fertility treatment may 'reduce sperm in offspring'**

Sperm counts in the first generation of men born after their mothers received fertility treatment appear to be nearly 50 per cent lower than in men conceived naturally.

The world's first study looking at the fertility of children born after their mothers received fertility treatment two decades ago has found their sperm concentration was 46 per cent lower, and sperm counts 45 per cent lower than in other men.

However, Peter Illingworth, medical director of the private Sydney-based fertility clinic IVF Australia, said the study "may suggest ... a higher likelihood of reproductive health problems among boys conceived from fertility treatments".

However, he said the men's sperm counts were still normal, and the study was consistent with previous research that found fertility-treatment children were at a slightly higher risk for a range of health problems. It remained unclear whether this was because of the fertility treatment itself, or whether it reflected a continuation of their parents' fertility problems.

To read the news story, please visit: <http://www.news.com.au/story/0,23599,21629924-2,00.html>

#### 4. Opinion: sensitivity, childlessness and Bill Heffernan

In the Sydney Morning Herald, Adele Horin poses the question ‘is it best not to bluster in where hearts can be fragile?’

An opinion piece about commenting publicly about a woman’s childlessness – whether it’s her choice or not. Read the article: <http://www.smh.com.au/news/opinion/best-not-to-bluster-where-hearts-can-be-fragile/2007/05/04/1177788391584.html>

#### 5. RTAC visits – are they coming to your clinic?

The RTAC team will be visiting a number of clinics during May and July, including:

UNIT	Date
<b>NT/QLD – North/City</b>	
Repromed Darwin	Monday, 21 <sup>st</sup> May
City Fert Gold Coast	Wednesday, 23 <sup>rd</sup> May
<b>QLD – Mid Coast</b>	
City Fertility Brisbane	Tuesday, 24 <sup>th</sup> July
Monash Rockhampton	Wednesday, 25 <sup>th</sup> July
QFG Mackay	Thursday, 26 <sup>th</sup> July
QFG Townsville	Friday, 27 <sup>th</sup> July

#### 6. Diabetes leads to male infertility

Rising diabetes may lead to a surge in male infertility, say UK scientists who have discovered that uncontrolled blood-sugar levels may damage sperm cells.

Sperm disorders cause or contribute to infertility in over 40 per cent of couples who cannot have children. A new UK study suggests that male fertility problems may become more widespread as diabetes rates rise.

For the full story, please visit:

- [New danger from diabetes: infertility](#), Hindustan Times, India
- [Diabetes Leads to Male Infertility](#), E Canada Now, Canada
- [Diabetes Linked To Male Infertility](#), Medical News Today, UK
- [New Findings Say Diabetes Can Lead to Male Infertility](#), Waleg.com, Tunisia

#### 7. Stem cell bill passes through Victorian government

Historic legislation to allow therapeutic cloning for stem cell production has passed the Upper House of the state's parliament in a historic conscience vote, 23 votes to 16.

Victoria is the first state to pass legislation mirroring federal therapeutic cloning laws. The new law allows excess human embryos from IVF treatment to be used to create

stems cells for medical research.

For the full story, please visit: <http://www.theage.com.au/news/National/Stem-cell-bill-passes-Vic-parliament/2007/05/03/1177788315454.html>.

## 8. DES and cancer

The Cancer Council in NSW has recently updated its fact sheet *Diethylstilboestrol (DES) and Cancer* and this is available at <http://www.cancercouncil.com.au/editorial.asp?pageid=248> or by phoning the Cancer Council Helpline on 13 11 20.

This fact sheet has important information, especially if you think something was taken in pregnancy to stop miscarriage. DES was an anti-miscarriage drug given during pregnancy from 1940 to 1971 (and sometimes beyond) in many countries including Australia.

We know that those women given DES and their children of that pregnancy are at higher risk of certain types of cancer and reproductive problems. If your mum was given a drug to prevent miscarriage - you, and she - may be DES exposed. Thousands of people in Australia are. If so, you must learn how to protect your health.

### Upcoming events:

- [iCSi meeting of international patient organisations](#), Lyon, France, July 2007.
- [ESHRE 2007](#), 23rd Annual Meeting of ESHRE, France, July 2007.
- [FSA Conference 2007](#), Hobart, September 2007.

### News articles:

Treatment and infertility issues in the global news in the past month:

- [Study finds couples open to embryo donation](#), Reuters, USA
- [Africa's infertility rate in the spotlight](#), Independent Online, South Africa
- [IVF blow for the childless](#), York Press, UK
- ['If you can treat arthritis on the NHS, why not infertility?'](#) The Herald, Scotland
- [Ethics aside, there is big money in selling eggs](#), Newindpress, India
- [The earlier you conceive, the better](#), The Monitor, Uganda
- [Time for pregnancy hypnosis](#), Daily Telegraph, Australia
- [Why Dad's Habits Matter, Too](#), U.S. News & World Report, USA
- [Americans Experiencing A 'Fertility Gap'](#), eMaxHealth.com, USA
- [IVF waiting list grows to three years](#), Scotsman, Scotland

*Please note: all external links were operational at the time of publishing.*

## Feedback

ACCESS eNews is published for the members. If you have any feedback, thoughts, ideas or links you would like to see included, please send them through to David Rawlings, eNews editor at [news@access.org.au](mailto:news@access.org.au).

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**References:** 1 **emla®** Product Information. Date of TGA approval 22/2/2006. 2. Hamilton JG. Needle phobia diagnosis. J Fam Pract 1995; 41: 169-175.

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*This eNews is kindly supported by untied educational grants from Serono Australia, IVF Australia, Organon Australia, MDS Diagnostics, Cook Women's Health and Health Media Group.*