

HIPS/24/28 - When To Start Assisted Reproductive Technology Treatment In Couples With Unexplained Infertility: A Dynamic Support Tool For Enhanced Decision-Making

Infertility affects 1-in-6 heterosexual couples. In a third of them, no cause can be found, and the condition is described as unexplained infertility. Although many of these couples can conceive on their own, it is difficult to predict who are most likely to do so and the traditional approach has been to treat everyone after 2 years. This blanket policy risks overtreatment using invasive and expensive procedures in those with a high chance of natural conception. It also fails to meet the needs of those with poorer prognoses who need treatment sooner. Together with patients and doctors we aim to develop an online decision support tool that can calculate the chance of having a baby with and without different fertility treatments in couples with unexplained infertility. It will be able to calculate these chances three months after diagnosis and to update them every three months thereafter. This will facilitate decisions around the optimal time to start treatment. This tool represents a transformative step towards personalised fertility care and will help clinicians and couples make informed and collaborative decisions about whether, when, and how to treat them such that their chances of having a baby are optimised. It will also assist health care managers and policy makers to plan a more efficient fertility treatment pathway, reduce waiting lists and maximise the use of NHS resources.