

## Male Fertility

*N Cherry et al. Occupational and Environmental Medicine. October (2001) Vol.58 # 10 p 635.*

A study of a proposed association between exposure to organic solvents and reduced sperm counts.

International conventions support the right to have a child (by natural means), any interference with this right could be the subject of legal action. Loss of fertility arising from some negligent exposure, might come under this heading.

There is growing consensus that sperm counts are in decline, among Westerners. Extreme examples among sub groups would tend to indicate a more local phenomenon. Sperm count is not the only factor in male fertility.

Low sperm count may be defined as having less than  $12 \times 10^6$  motile sperm per ml.

Men attending a fertility clinic were asked about their employment, in particular any work involving exposure to organic solvents.

The reported odds ratio for an association between moderate exposure and caseness was 2.07 (95% CI = 1.24 to 3.44)

The odds ratio for an association between high exposure and caseness was OR = 3.83 (95% CI = 1.37 to 10.65).

### Comment

Exposure assessment was not of the highest standard, but the strength of association reported here will encourage further studies of this sort. Previous studies in other areas of the world have found results that point in the same general direction.

COSSH guidance in this country tends to focus on female fertility, this may change.

