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Voulgaridis' Andro-Test Uses Sperm Samples to Screen for Diseases in Men

By ANA April 11, 2018



Greek biologist Giorgos Voulgaridis. (Photo by ANA)

An innovative preventive test developed by Greek biologist Giorgos Voulgaridis will for the first time provide men with a simple test that can screen for diseases of the reproductive system, even when these do not generate recognisable symptoms.

Talking to the Athens-Macedonian News Agency (ANA), Voulgaridis described the new "andro-test" as the male equivalent of the annual smear test for women and a new trend "that will teach men to care for their health". The test uses sperm samples, which Voulgaridis said can reveal the existence of hidden problems, whose existence is often not discovered until men encounter fertility problems at a later age. The full interview to the ANA's Evi Fouseki is given below:

ANA: What is the andro-test and how reliable is it?

Since 2009, we have observed that certain traits in sperm are more frequent when there are specific ailments. Eight years later, using data from 1,197 men and having confirmed our conclusions in collaboration with urologists specialising in andrology, we are in a position to confirm that if there is some anomaly in the function of the male reproductive system, this will show up in the andro-test, a sperm analysis that in addition to fertility also shows whether a man's reproductive system is healthy.

ANA: Is the andro-test in some ways equivalent to the smear test?

Exactly! It is not simply one more test but a new trend. It has to be admitted that we men neglect our health and it is hard for someone to convince us to regularly visit the urologist. For this reason, apart from the new laboratory test, I have also described how to home-test your sperm. In other words, a man can examine his sperm in private, using three simple steps, and check if he needs to visit a urologist. In this way, he does not have to go to a lab to have the andro-test done. Learning to examine it himself is enough and is also a very good start.

The andro-test will become a reason for men to learn to regularly consult their urologist, in the same way that women have learned to consult a gynaecologist for some years now. By the way, George Papanicolaou was also a biologist.

ANA: At what age should the test be done and how frequently?

Every man must learn to how to examine his sperm at the start of his sexual life and to visit a urologist at least once a year. Women have learned to visit a gynaecologist once a year, even if they have no disruption of their cycle or an infection, which usually causes symptoms in women. Preventative screening for men is even more important because we men do not have symptoms that might alert us when our testicles are not functioning properly or if we have an infection.

ANA: What kinds of problems could men avoid if they had preventive tests and what is the role of prompt diagnosis?

If men are screened preventively from a young age and deal with possible problems early on, they will have better sperm after age 30 – a fact that would restrict the need for IVF treatments. Also, curing an infection in a man that has no symptoms will prevent the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases in both sexes. Prompt treatment of infections of the male reproductive system is expected to significantly help in reducing the incidence of prostate cancer in the future.

The andro-test is expected, therefore, to improve quality of life for everyone and greatly benefit world health.

ANA: Do urologists or biologists carry out the andro-test?

The andro-test can only be carried out by biologists with special training in spermatology and only in spermatology laboratories. At this time, only SPERMLAB offers this test but we are training biologists so that they can start spermatology laboratories throughout Greece and the world. However, only a urologist is competent to interpret the results of the andro-test and to recommend the right treatment, if necessary.

ANA: What stage are we at with respect to informing the scientific community and the state?

We have already informed urology associations worldwide about the andro-test, while we are using every contemporary means of communication to invite biologists around the world to come so that we can train them and provide our expertise to every corner of the earth. Shortly, the political leadership is expected to take action to sensitise men regarding the importance of preventive testing, in other words an annual andrological screening.