

Intrauterine insemination/superovulation treatment (IUI/SO)

IUI treatment is used principally in cases of prolonged unexplained subfertility or where there are problems with the survival of the man's sperm in the woman's cervical mucus. It may sometimes be helpful when there is a mild intrinsic problem with the man's sperm, but it is not believed to be helpful in cases of moderate or severe sperm problems nor is it likely to be effective if there is a problem with the woman's Fallopian tubes.

'Natural cycle' IUI may be helpful in some circumstances but due to practical difficulties with the scheduling of treatments, its lower success rate and the limited provision for NHS-funded IVF our clinic and others within the South-West Peninsula only undertake IUI in conjunction with ovulation induction (superovulation). In this case hormones are given (as described in the leaflet on 'superovulation') to control the development and, in particular, the timing of the woman's ovulation. The man's sperm sample is prepared for the treatment at a time very close to the woman's ovulation.

The sperm are injected into the woman's uterus (womb) through the cervix (neck of the womb) using a flexible plastic tube. The treatment itself is usually quite quick and painless and normal activities can be resumed immediately afterwards. Evidence to date suggests that if IUI treatment is going to succeed it will usually do so within four treatment cycles. It will not normally be offered beyond that, therefore.

If a couple undergoing IUI treatment are faced with the possibility of having to abandon a treatment cycle because of the development of too many follicles (and hence an unacceptably high risk of multiple pregnancy) it may be possible for them to switch to undergo IVF treatment instead. Whether this might be possible would depend upon:

- a) whether this could be accommodated within the Clinic's schedule;
- b) whether necessary counselling and consent procedures could be fitted in in time; and,
- c) whether the follicles can be made to develop and mature in a manner suitable for IVF;

The Clinic may offer a reduction in the standard IVF private charge (where applicable) for such a 'last-minute' conversion