



News Release

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Male contraception put to the test in Manchester and Edinburgh

Couples in Edinburgh and Manchester are being invited to take part in a ground-breaking international study trialling a new form of male contraception.

Men will be asked to use a daily gel that suppresses sperm production as their sole method of birth control as part of two-year study to assess whether the gel is effective in preventing pregnancy and whether this method is acceptable to couples.

The gel – called NEST/T – is a hormone-based treatment that is designed to reduce sperm production without affecting libido. Men will apply the gel daily to their upper arms and shoulders and attend monthly clinics to monitor their sperm count.

Condoms and vasectomy are currently the only form of contraception available to men. Many women experience unacceptable side effects with their contraceptive method and so couples are looking for alternatives.

The study is being led in the UK by Saint Mary's Hospital, part of Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust, and the University of Edinburgh. It is part of an international project funded by the US National Institute of Health and led by the Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute and the University of Washington School of Medicine.

Men aged between 18 and 50, who are in a stable relationship with a woman aged between 18 and 34, are invited to be part of the trial by calling 0161 276 3296 (Manchester) or 0131 242 2669 (Edinburgh).

Professor Richard Anderson, of the University of Edinburgh's MRC Centre for Reproductive Health, said: "Previous trials have shown that hormonal contraception for men can be safe and effective. This trial allows men to self-administer a gel, which may be much more convenient and acceptable than needing repeated injections."

Dr Cheryl Fitzgerald, Consultant Gynaecologist at Saint Mary's Hospital, who is leading the study in Manchester said: "Currently the contraceptive options for men are limited to condoms and vasectomies. We believe this preparation will allow men to control their fertility in a safe and simple way."

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Notes for editors

Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (MFT) is one of the largest acute Trusts in the UK, employing over 20,000 staff.

We are responsible for running a family of nine hospitals across six separate sites, providing a wide range of services from comprehensive local general hospital care through to highly specialised regional and national services.