

Unit II – Cryopreservation of gametes



Why cryopreservation of gametes?

- Zootechnics
- Reproductive medicine
- Laboratory animals
- Biodiversity

Not only cows...



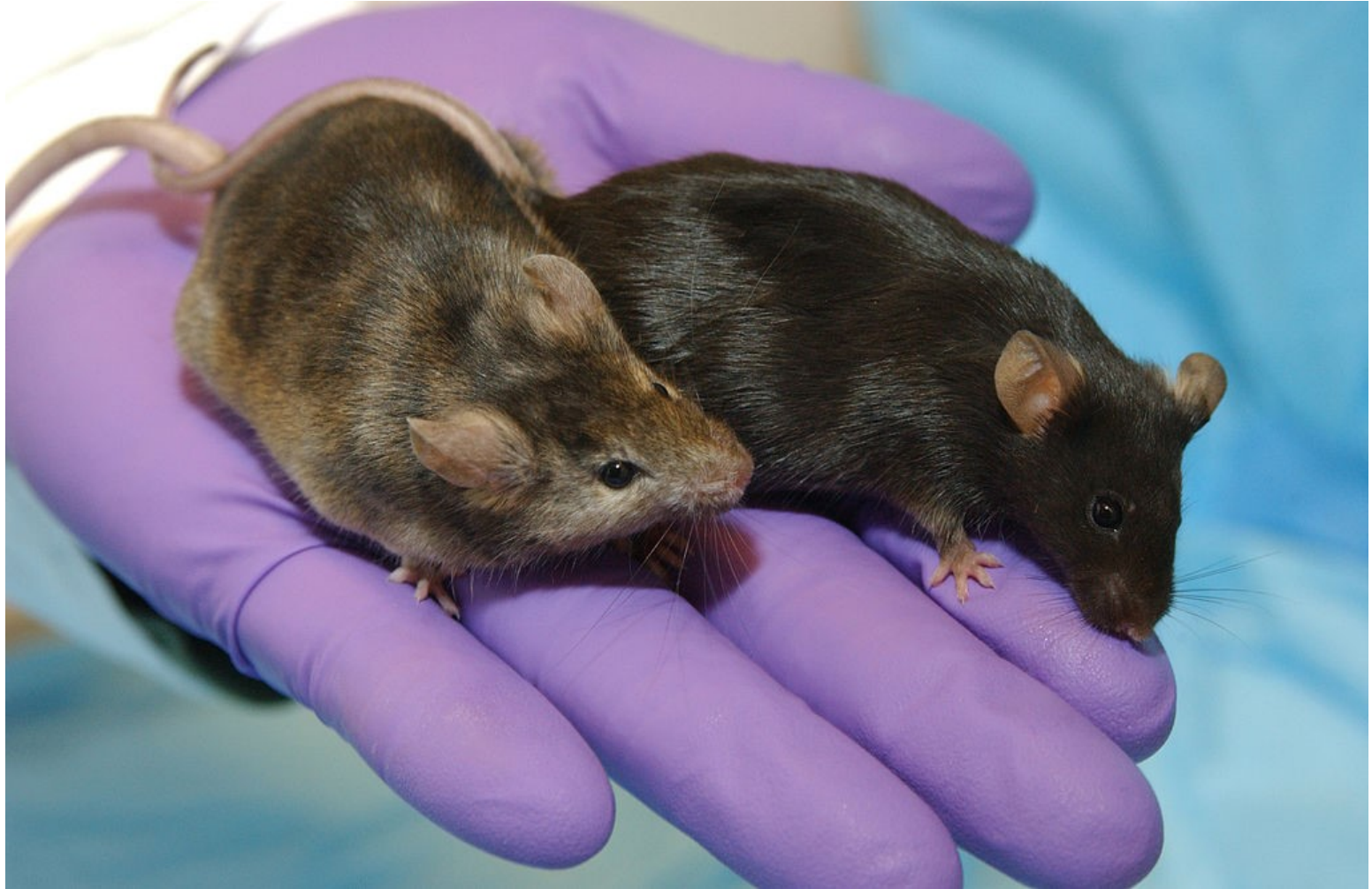
ART



Indication for gametes cryopreservation in human ART

- Chemotherapy, radiotherapy
- Diabetes and autoimmune disorders
- Infectious diseases
- MESE/TESE.
- Semen collection distress

Laboratory animals



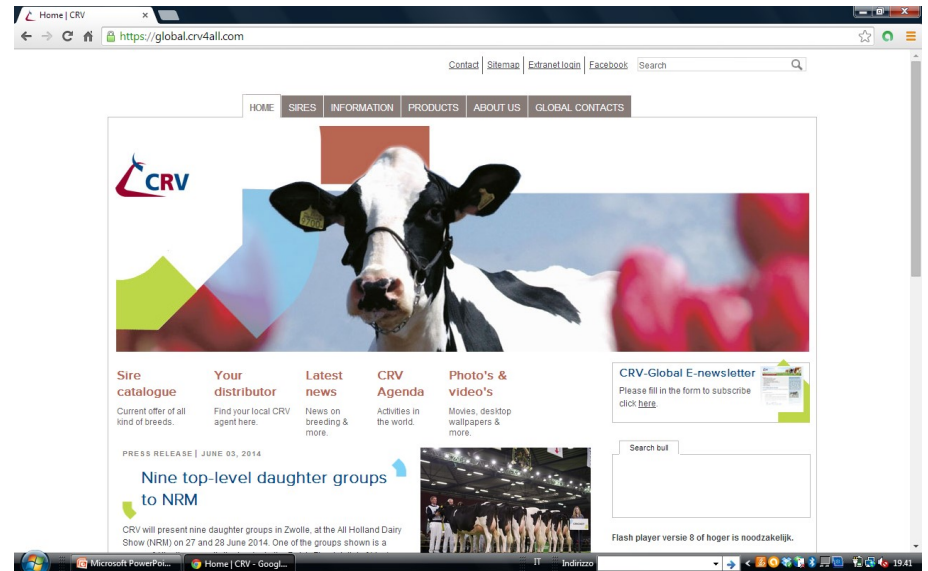
Biodiversity



Interesse di diverse categorie

- zootechnicians
- physicians
- Veterinarians
- Farmers
- Association for biodiversity protection/conservation
- Patients
- ...

It means ...



Cryopreservation of spermatozoa



problems

- Non spherical shape
- Highly dynamic cytoskeleton
- Highly dynamic membranes
- Need of economic protocols
- High differences among subjects, breeds, species, ...

Methods

IMPORTANT: it is believed that, due to the low water content and high concentration of cytoplasmic proteins, in spermatozoa of intracellular ice crystals are not formed, regardless of the used freezing protocol.

Morris GJ, Actona E, Murray BJ, Fonseca F. Freezing injury: The special case of the sperm cell. *Cryobiology* 2012;64: 71-80.

Metodologie applicate

Slow Freezing: 2-4h.

example:

from RT to 5°C -> cooling rate 0.5 – 1 °C/min

from 5°C to -80°C -> “ “ 1 – 10 °C/min

Then in N₂ at -196°C.

 Manually

 Programmable freezers

Rapid Freezing: direct contact of sample with N₂ vapors.

It requires 8-10 minutes.

https://www.corning.com/media/worldwide/cls/documents/t_cryoanimalcc.pdf

Cryopreservation of small numbers of spermatzoa

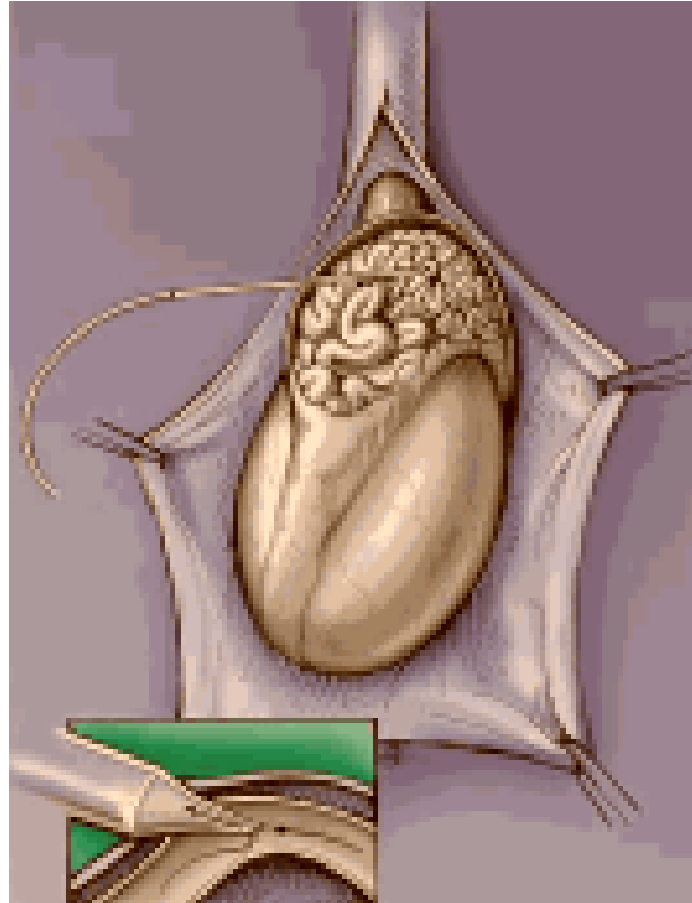
Useful in several pathological conditions.

It allows the availability for long times of gametes.

It is often used in combination with other technologies

- 1. MESA, *Microsurgical epididymal sperm aspiration*
- 2. PESA, *Percutaneous epididymal sperm aspiration*
- 3. TESE, *Testicular sperm extraction*
- 4. TESA, *Percutaneous testicular sperm aspiration*

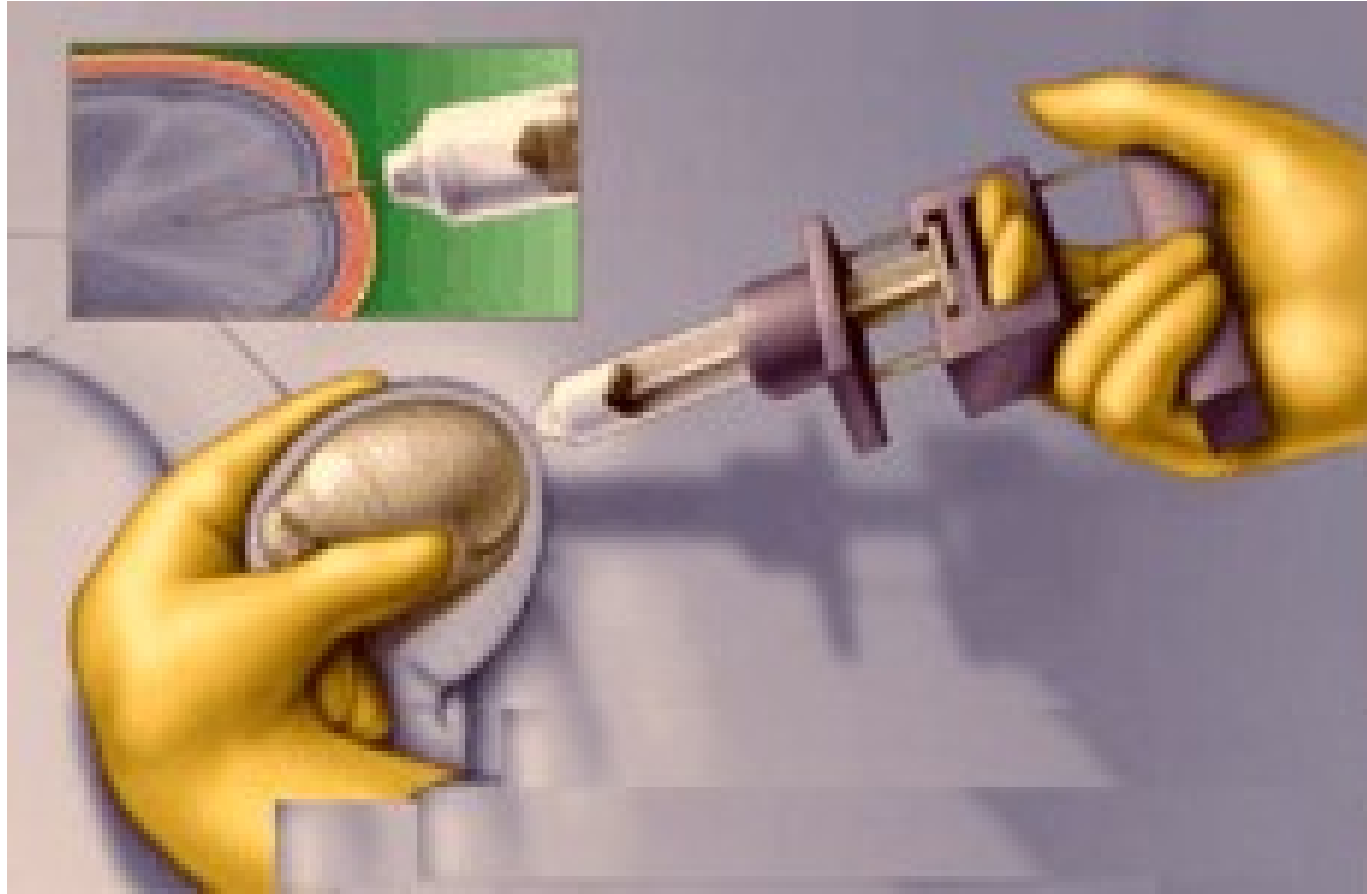
Microsurgical Epididymal Sperm Aspiration



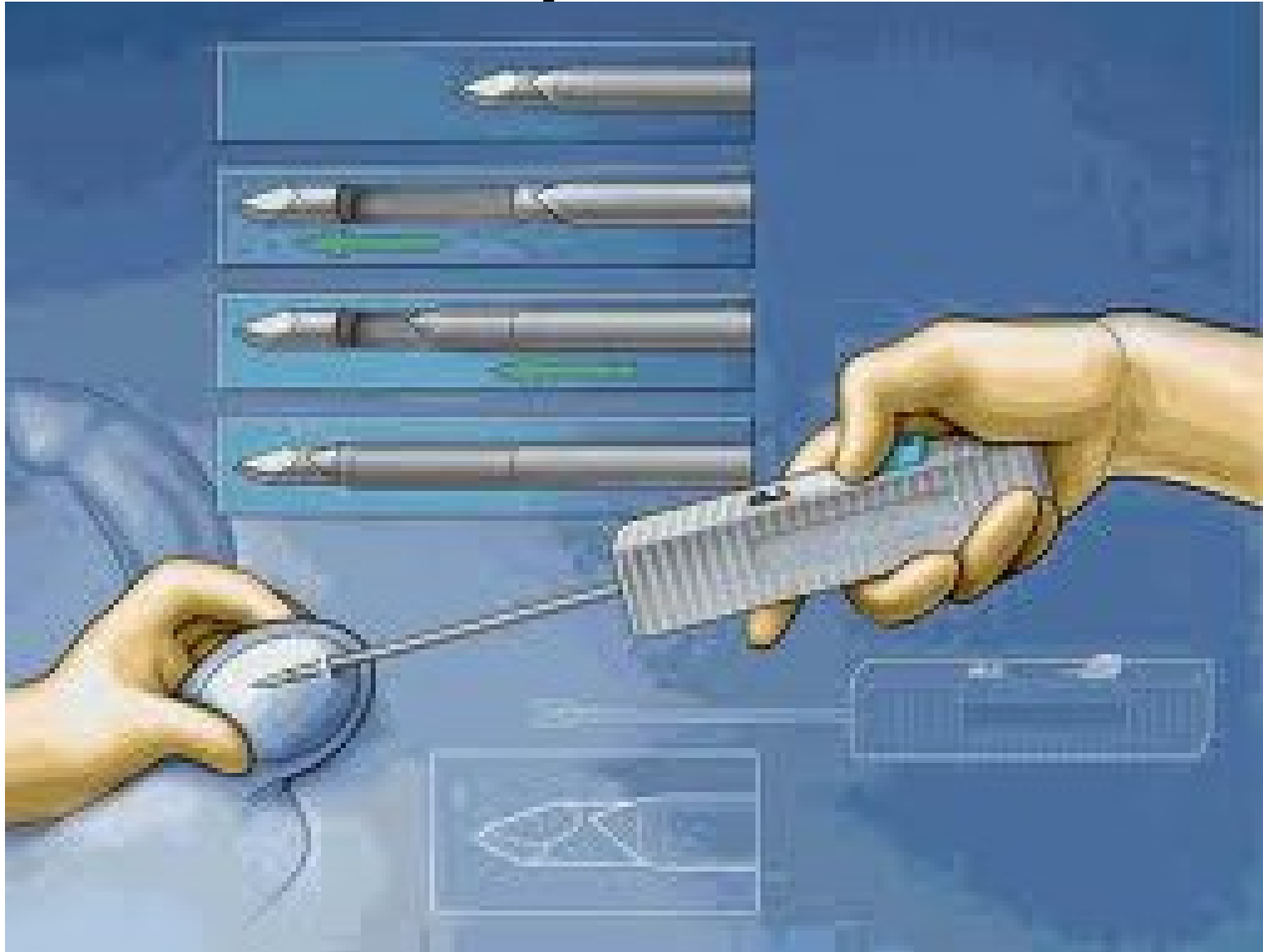
Percutaneous Epididymal Sperm Aspiration



Testicular Percutaneous Sperm Aspiration/Fine Needle Aspiration



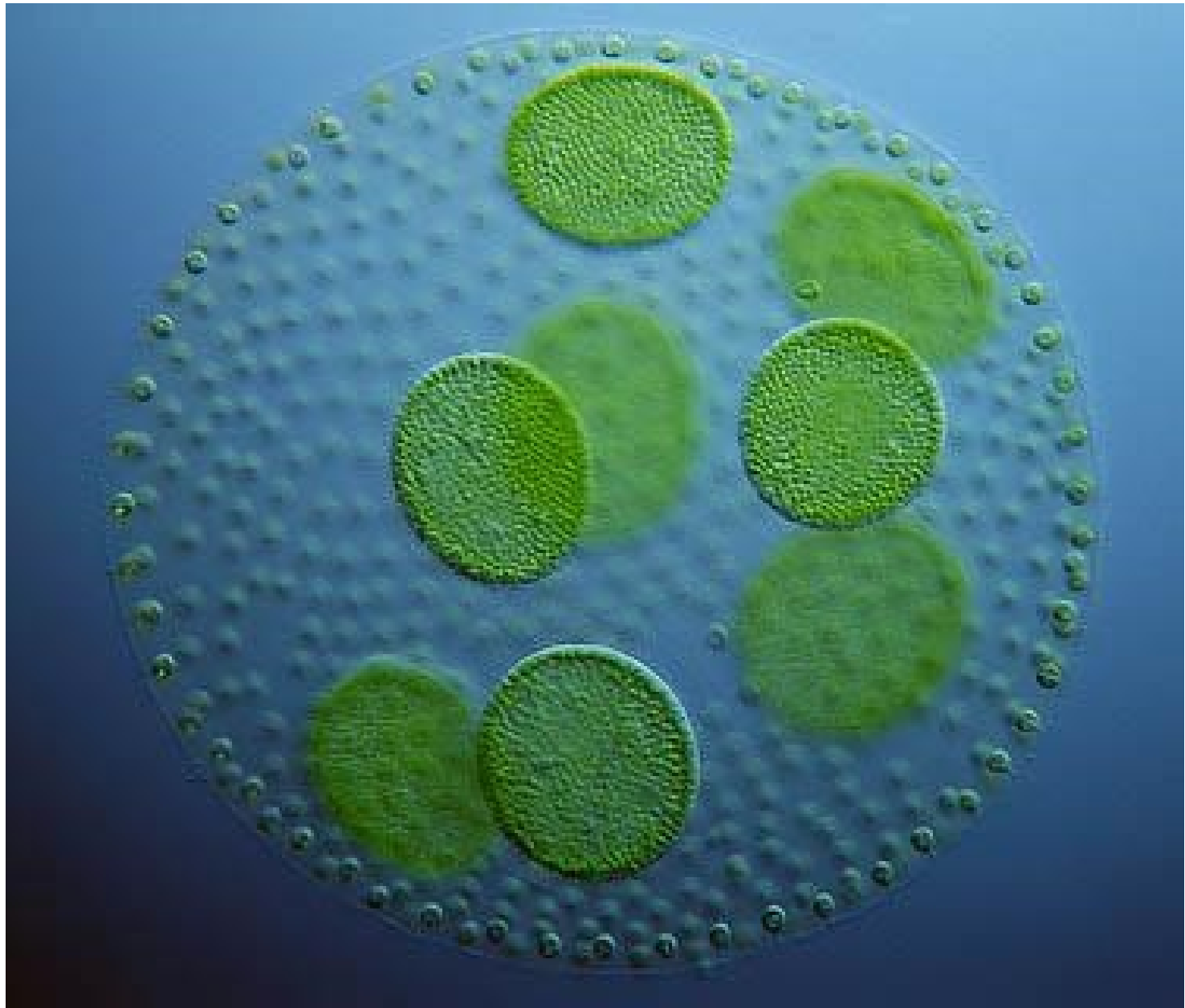
Testicular Sperm Extraction



Methods

TABLE 1: Approaches to cryopreserve limited number of spermatozoa.

Cryopreservation techniques	Authors	Principle	Main advantages	Main disadvantages
Empty zona pellucida	Borini et al. [69] Cohen et al. [70] Walmsley et al. [71] Montag et al. [72] Hsieh et al. [73] Liu et al. [74] Levi-Setti et al. [75] Cesana et al. [76] Hassa et al. [77]	Storage of individual spermatozoa in animal or human empty zona pellucida.	Avoid waste of time in screening to locate motile sperm; cryoprotectants can be added and removed without loss of spermatozoa sequestered in the zona	Risk of biological contamination
Microdroplets	Gil-Salom et al. [78] Sereni et al. [79] Quintans et al. [80] Bouamama et al. [81]	Storage of droplets of sperm/cryoprotectants mixture on the surface of dry ice and directly plunged into liquid nitrogen	Avoid sperm loss through adherence to the vessel	Risk of cross-contamination; shape and size of dishes make difficult to handle and store in conventional freezers and liquid nitrogen tanks
ICSI pipette	Gvakharia et al. [82] Sohn et al. [83]	Storage of spermatozoa in ICSI pipettes	Sterile, simple, and convenient system	Not practical for long-term storage; fragility of ICSI pipettes; risk of cross-contamination
<i>Volvox globator</i> spheres	Just et al. [84]	Storage of sperm into spheres of <i>Volvox globator</i>	Significant postthaw recovery of motile sperm	Exposure to genetic material from the algae; constant source of algae
Alginate beads	Herrler et al. [85]	Microencapsulation in alginate beads	Inert nature of alginate beads	Decrease sperm motility with encapsulation
Cryoloop	Nawroth et al. [86] Schuster et al. [87] Isachenko et al. [42] Isachenko et al. [42] Desai et al. [88] Desai et al. [89]	Individual spermatozoa deposited directly on cryoprotectant film covering the nylon loop and immersed in liquid nitrogen	Excellent vessel for vitrification; no additional preparation	Open system: risk of cross-contamination
Agarose microspheres	Isaev et al. [90]	Storage of sperm loaded in agarose microspheres	Nonbiological carrier	Clinical value of this approach not evaluated
Straws	Desai et al. [91] Isachenko et al. [92] Koscinski et al. [93]	Sperm/cryoprotectants loaded into the ministraw	Sterile, simple, and convenient system	Not ideal for severely impaired specimens; sperm loss due to adherence to the vessel



Sperm cryopreservation and DNA damage

TABLE 2: (a)–(c) Evaluation of DNA integrity after cryopreservation: description of the experimental design and conclusions.

(a)				
Authors	Test to evaluate DNA integrity	Number of samples	Cryopreservation method	"Does the freezing-thawing procedure induce sperm DNA damage?"
Hamamah et al. [94]	Acridine orange staining and Feulgen-DNA quantitative microspectrophotometry	10	Unspecified	Yes
Spanò et al. [44]	SCSA + Acridine orange staining	19	Equilibration at 37°C, freezing in liquid nitrogen vapour at -80°C, and then storage in liquid nitrogen at -196°C	Yes
Hammadeh et al. [95]	Acridine orange staining	59	Computerized slow-stage freezer + static liquid nitrogen vapour	Yes
Donnelly et al. [6]	COMET assay	40	Equilibration at 37°C, freezing in liquid nitrogen vapour at -80°C, and then storage in liquid nitrogen at -196°C	Yes
Gandini et al. [96]	Acridine orange staining	19	Equilibration at 37°C, freezing in liquid nitrogen vapour at -80°C, and then storage in liquid nitrogen at -196°C	Yes
de Paula et al. [40]	TUNEL assay	77: (I) 30 normozoospermic (II) 47 oligozoospermic	Use of freezer at -20°C, freezing in liquid nitrogen vapour, then storage in liquid nitrogen -196°C	Yes
Petyim and Choavaratana [43]	Acridine orange staining	50	Freezing with liquid nitrogen vapour + computerized program freezer	Yes
Nagamwattiwong and Kunathikom [97]	Acridine orange staining	20	Freezing with liquid nitrogen vapour	Yes
Dejarkom and Kunathikom [98]	Acridine orange staining	20	Computerized controlled rate freezing	Yes
Thomson et al. [46]	TUNEL assay	60	Use of programmable freezer	Yes
Thomson et al. [46]	TUNEL assay	320	Sample frozen with and without cryoprotectant by slow-controlled-rate method using a programmable freezer	Yes
Zribi et al. [45]	TUNEL assay	15	Equilibration at 37°C, freezing in liquid nitrogen vapour at -80°C, then storage in liquid nitrogen at -196°C	Yes

(b)				
Authors	Test to evaluate DNA integrity	Number of samples	Cryopreservation technique	"Does the freezing-thawing procedure induce sperm DNA damage?"
Donnelly et al. [6]	COMET assay	57: (I) 17 fertile (II) 40 infertile	Equilibration at 37°C, freezing in liquid nitrogen vapour at -80°C, then storage in liquid nitrogen at -196°C	Yes, but semen from fertile men appears to be more resistant to freezing damage
Kalthur et al. [49]	COMET assay + Acridine orange staining	44	Equilibration at 37°C, static cooling at 4°C, cooling vapour phase, then storage in liquid nitrogen at -196°C	Yes, but morphologically abnormal sperms seems to be less resistant to freezing damage
Ahmad et al. [99]	COMET assay	196: (I) 30 normospermic (II) 166 infertile	Freezing with static-phase vapour cooling procedure	Yes, but the sperm DNA integrity of frozen samples of fertile men is higher

(c)				
Authors	Test to evaluate the DNA integrity	Number of samples	Cryopreservation technique	"Does the freezing-thawing procedure induce sperm DNA damage?"
Høst et al. [100]	Immunoperoxidase detection of digoxigenin-labelled genomic DNA	53: (I) 20 fertile (II) 33 infertile	Conventional cryopreservation	No
Steele et al. [101]	COMET assay	21: (I) 9 control (II) 12 with obstructive azoospermia	Freezing in liquid nitrogen vapour	No
Duru et al. [41]	TUNEL assay + annexin V	21	Equilibration at 37°C, freezing in liquid nitrogen vapour at -80°C, then storage in liquid nitrogen at -196°C	No
Isachenko et al. [42]	COMET assay	18	Programmable slow freezing + vitrification	No
Paasch et al. [50]	TUNEL assay + flow cytometric kit for apoptosis	84	Freezing at -20°C, freezing in liquid nitrogen vapor at -100°C, then storage in liquid nitrogen at -196°C	No

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Review Article

Human Sperm Cryopreservation: Update on Techniques, Effect on DNA Integrity, and Implications for ART

Marlea Di Santo, Nicoletta Tarozzi, Marco Nadalini, and Andrea Borini

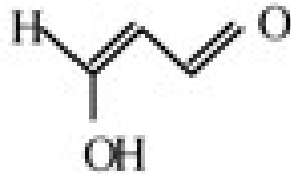
Cryopreservation damages



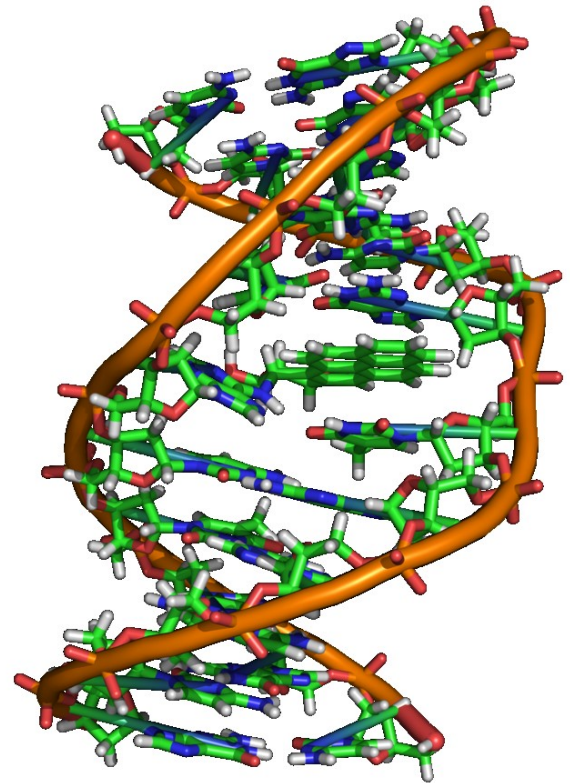
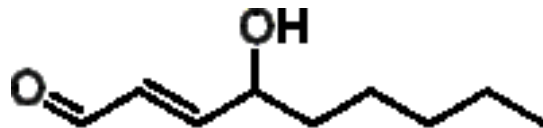
lipoperoxidation

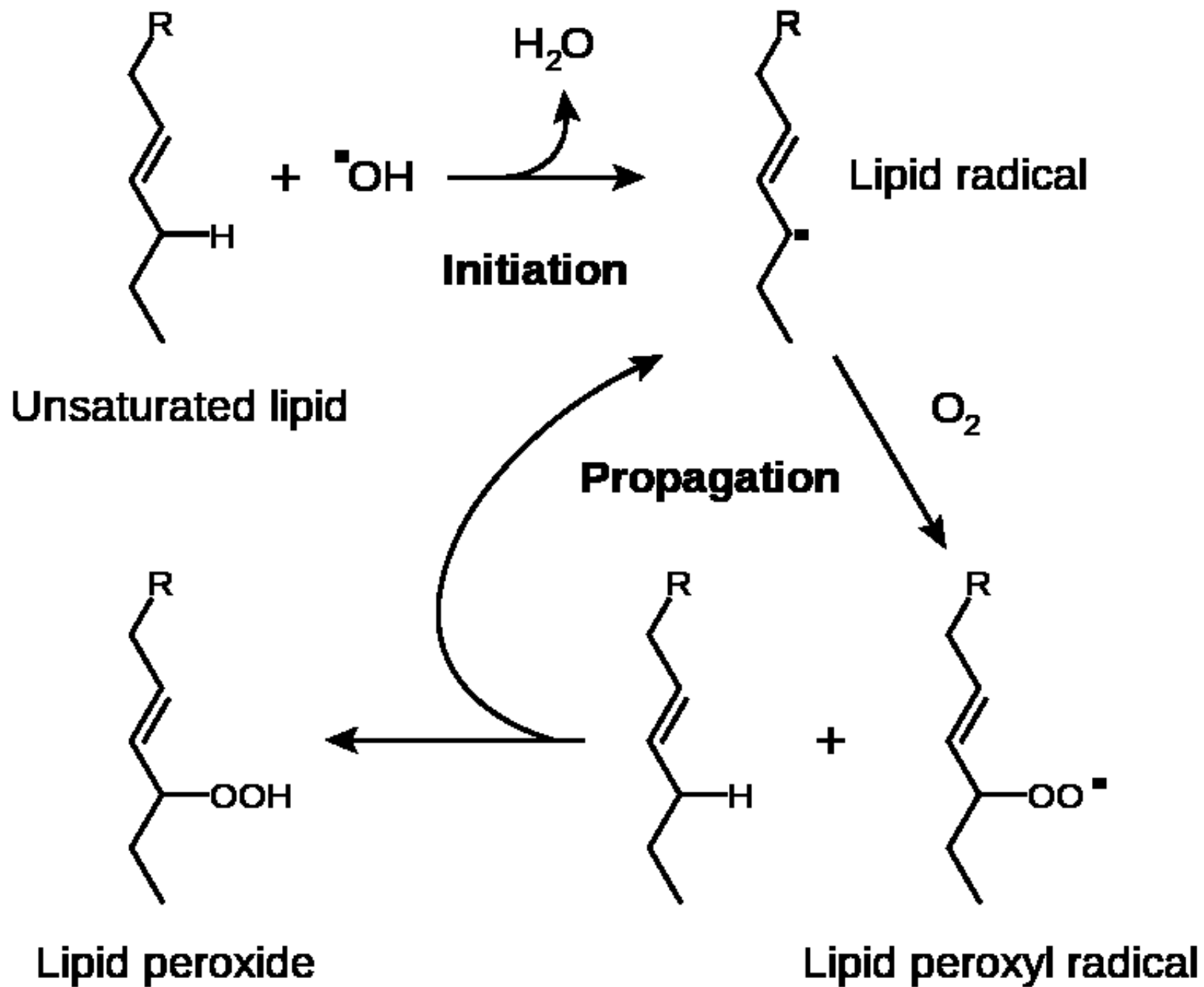
As terminal products are formed reactive aldehydes, including the malonalaldehyde (MDA) and the hydroxynonenal (HNE). Possible formation of adducts with DNA

MDA



HNE





Differences among individuals and breeds

- It is a very important issue, for instance, in swine.
- The use of cryopreserved spermatozoa causes the reduction of the number of newborns (1 – 3).
- It is likely due to the high levels of polyunsaturated fatty acids DPA; 22:5, n-6 and DHA; 22:6, n-3.

Within and between breed differences in freezing tolerance and plasma membrane fatty acid composition of boar sperm

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Table 1 Percentages of live and live acrosome intact (LAI) sperm at different storage temperatures for Norwegian Landrace ($n = 12$) and Duroc ($n = 12$) boars. Values are presented as means (s.d.).

	18 °C ^a	5 °C ^b	38.5 °C ^b	Post-thaw ^b
Live sperm (%)				
Landrace	95.5 (1.5)	92.4 (1.1)	87.3 (2.9)	48.8 (10.1)
Duroc	94.3 (2.6)	92.8 (2.0)	87.6 (3.6)	51.3 (11.0)
LAI sperm (%)				
Landrace	94.4 (1.7)	91.1 (1.5)	63.5 (18.9)	44.7 (10.5)
Duroc	92.5 (4.4)	91.9 (2.2)	71.7 (12.8)	45.0 (8.8)

^aSperm diluted and stored in BTS; ^bsperm diluted and stored in freezing extender containing 20% egg yolk and 4% glycerol.

Table 2 Percentage gram fatty acids found in phospholipids of sperm plasma membrane from Norwegian Landrace ($n = 12$) and Duroc ($n = 12$) boars. Values are presented as means (S.D.).

Fatty acid	Landrace	Duroc
Saturates, total	37.3 (7.15)	37.4 (6.0)
12:0	0.35 (0.52)	0.05 (0.17)
14:0	2.15 (3.30)	1.11 (0.51)
16:0	18.35 (4.03)	18.93 (3.10)
18:0	16.44 (4.12)	17.31 (3.46)
Monounsaturates, total	12.4 (3.7)	13.4 (3.0)
14:1	0.67 (1.18)	0.21 (0.59)
16:1	nd	0.48 (0.84)
18:1, n-9	11.75 (3.67)	12.71 (3.48)
Polyunsaturates, total	50.3 (7.1)	49.1 (5.9)
18:2, n-6	6.32 (2.16)	6.83 (2.43)
18:3, n-3	1.59 (4.55)	0.30 (0.89)
20:4, n-3	6.21 (4.53)	8.76 (10.36)
22:3, n-6	1.55 (2.17)	0.30 (0.70)
22:4, n-6	1.87 (2.63)	0.75 (1.16)
22:5, n-6	15.40 (6.01)	13.92 (5.41)
22:5, n-3	0.45 (0.86)	0.26 (0.43)
22:6, n-3	16.91 (6.25)	18.03 (5.95)
Fatty acid ratios		
Unsaturates/saturates	1.76 (0.46)	1.73 (0.38)
22/rest of fatty acid	0.60 (0.23)	0.52 (0.18)
22:6, n-3/22:5, n-6	1.20 (0.43)	1.39 (0.61)

nd, not detected.

Table 3 Correlation coefficients between percentages of live sperm after freezing and thawing and fatty acid ratios of frozen-thawed sperm from Norwegian Landrace ($n = 12$) and Duroc ($n = 12$) boars.

Ratio	Live sperm (%), Landrace	Live sperm (%), Duroc
Unsaturates/saturates	0.42	-0.04
22/rest of fatty acid	0.64*	0.67*
22:6, n-3/22:5, n-6	-0.52	-0.24

* $P < 0.05$.

In conclusion, the results of our study indicate that it is the individual male and not the breed that is decisive for the survival rate, measured as plasma membrane integrity, after freezing and thawing of boar sperm. Furthermore, the male-to-male differences in sperm survival after freezing and thawing seem to be partially related to the amounts of long-chain PUFAs in the plasma membrane after freezing and thawing. Future work will compare initial and frozen-thawed fatty acid composition of the sperm plasma membranes and will study the relationship with survival rates after cryopreservation.

Identification of Amplified Restriction Fragment Length Polymorphism Markers Linked to Genes Controlling Boar Sperm Viability Following Cryopreservation¹

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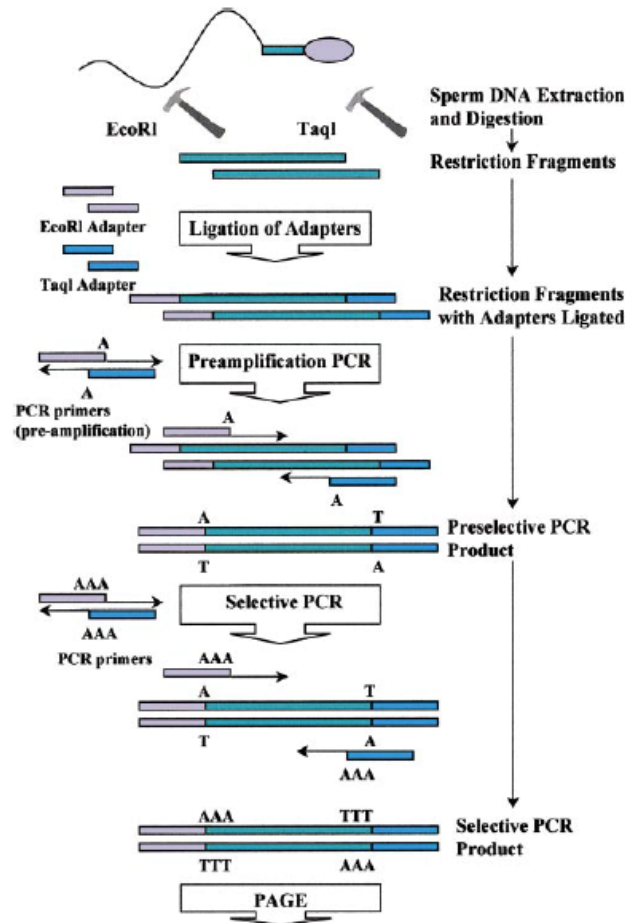


FIG. 1. Schematic outline of the AFLP technique.

TABLE 5. Mean (\pm SD) sperm viability measurements for each of the PATN-derived classifications of good, average, and poor postthaw recovery (freezability).

Freezability	No. boars	Motility (%)	Membrane intact (%)	Acrosome intact (%)	Active motility (%)
Poor	42	17.65 (5.12)	17.22 (9.97)*	88.45 (4.32)	3.01 (1.98)*
Average	63	22.69 (4.83)	28.67 (7.29)*	82.76 (6.66)	5.27 (2.34)*
Good	24	54.12 (12.32)*	37.19 (10.60)*	90.82 (7.14)	12.41 (4.45)*

* Viability parameters are significantly different between PATN-derived classifications of semen freezability (poor, average, and good) ($P < 0.05$).

TABLE 6. Variation in the number of boars classified with good, average, and poor semen freezability from each of three breeds.

Breed	No. boars			Total
	Good n (%)	Medium n (%)	Poor n (%)	
Large White	9 (7)	25 (19)	13 (10)	47 (36)
Landrace	13 (10)	17 (13)	4 (3)	34 (26)
Duroc	2 (2)	21 (16)	25 (19)	48 (37)
Total	24 (19)	63 (49)	42 (33)	129 (100)

TABLE 7. Logistic regression analysis of the presence or absence of AFLP markers with classifications of good or bad freezability and semen quality assessments.

Marker	Variable*	Regression coefficient	SEM	Significance of variables (<i>P</i>)	Significance of logistic model (<i>P</i>)
1	G/B	0.599	1	0.005	0.005
2	G/B	0.643	1	0.005	0.003
3	G/B	0.650	1	0.005	0.004
4	G/B	0.740	1	0.001	0.0007
5	G/B	0.589	1	0.005	0.005
6	G/B	0.759	1	0.001	0.0001
7	G/B	0.639	1	0.005	0.005
7	SYBR14 (%)	0.775	0.1	0.0009	
8	G/B	0.639	1	0.005	0.005
8	SYBR14	0.436	0.1	0.04	
9	G/B	0.641	1	0.005	0.005
9	SYBR14 (%)	0.752	0.07	0.001	
10	G/B	0.663	1	0.005	0.003
11	G/B	0.662	1	0.004	0.004
11	Motile (%)	0.503	0.12	0.02	
11	Progressive motility (%)	0.436	0.41	0.04	
11	SYBR14 (%)	0.639	0.06	0.005	
12	G/B	0.600	1	0.003	0.005
13	G/B	0.662	1	0.006	0.005
14	G/B	0.797	1	0.0008	0.005
15	G/B	0.727	1	0.001	0.004
16	G/B	0.752	1	0.001	0.0008

* G/B are classifications of good and bad freezers, SYBR14 (%) refers to the percentage of spermatozoa with intact plasma membranes in the thawed ejaculate.

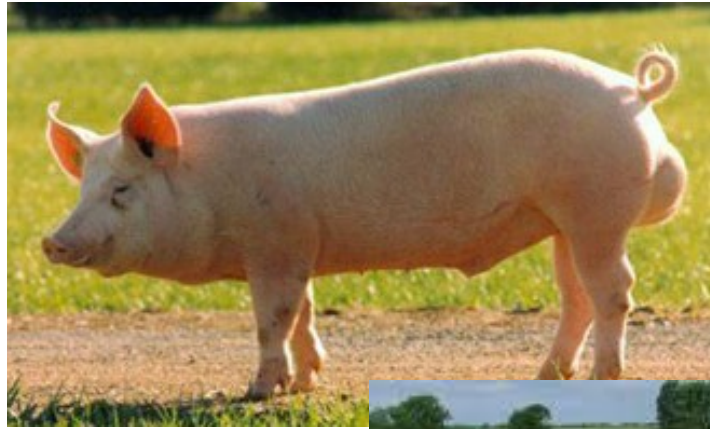
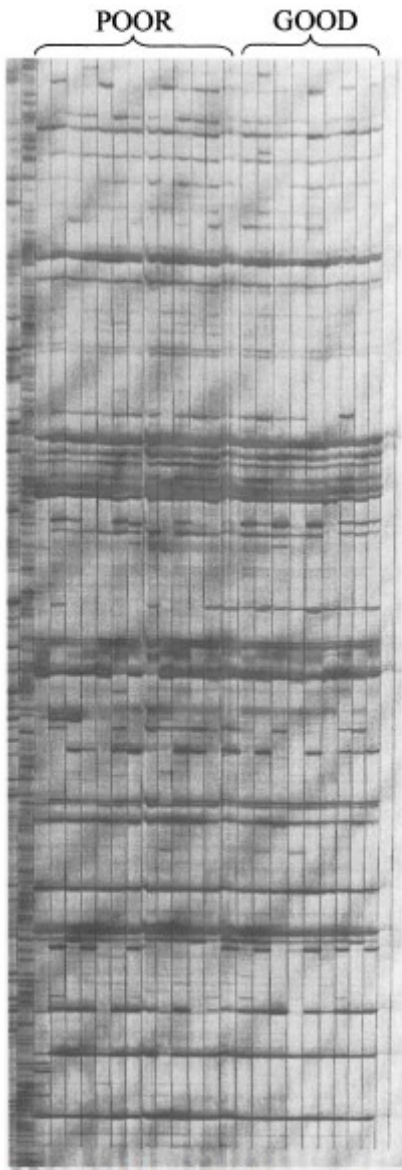


FIG. 2. Example of an AFLP profile for a specific primer combination. The arrow indicates a potential freezability marker. Each lane shows DNA restriction fragments amplified from a specific boar classified as good or poor freezer based on the quality of its semen after freezing.



The significance of cooling rates and animal variability for boar sperm cryopreservation: insights from the cryomicroscope

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Like any other experiments, semen cryopreservation studies require replication with samples from different individuals for the estimation of variance, so that the experimental data can be evaluated using formal statistical analysis. This rightly engenders an approach in which the evaluation of treatment effects is the priority, significant between-replicate variance being something of a nuisance. However, critical evaluation of much of the semen cryopreservation literature suggests that this approach actually hides much that is of interest, especially in terms of species and individual variation.

Pazienti oncologici

Sperm (and oocyte) cryopreservation could be useful for oncologic patients as well as those with several other pathologies

Sperm storage for cancer patients in the UK: a review of current practice

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In the UK in the period 1979-2008 about 75% of cancer patients were over 65 years old and about 1% were aged under 14 years. About 24% of tumors hit patients between 15 and 64 years.

- (1) possible deterioration or loss of viability of gametes or embryos as a result of storage, handling, freezing, transportation and thawing.
- (2) the potential risk of cross-contamination between samples.
- (3) the regulations for statutory storage periods for gametes and embryos.
- (4) the regulations for extending storage periods including, in the case of embryos, the requirement for both gamete providers to consent to any extension of storage.
- (5) the likelihood of a live birth resulting from previously cryopreserved embryos or gametes.
- (6) the treatments that may be necessary.
- (7) the screening tests to be done.
- (8) the cost of these.
- (9) the reason for them.
- (10) the implications of the tests for the gamete providers.

Effect of chemotherapy on fertility

Table 1 Long-term fertility prognosis following treatment with different agents

Good	Moderate	Poor
Azathioprine	Thiotepa	Cyclophosphamide ($>7.5 \text{ g/m}^2$) (Meistrich et al., 1992)
Fludarabine	Gemcitabine	Ifosfamide ($>60 \text{ g/m}^2$) (Williams et al., 2008)
Methotrexate	Cisplatin	Mustine, carmustine
6-mercaptopurine	Oxaliplatin	Busulfan
	Carboplatin	Chlorambucil ($>1.4 \text{ g/m}^2$)
Vincristine	Doxorubicin	Melphalan (140 mg/m^2)
Vinblastine	Dacarbazine	Chlormethine
Bleomycin	Cytosine-arabioside (cytarabine)	Procarbazine ($>4 \text{ g/m}^2$) (Bokemeyer et al., 1994)
Actinomycin-D	Daunorubicin	Cisplatin ($>600 \text{ mg/m}^2$) (Petersen et al., 1994; Pont and Albrecht, 1997)
Etoposide	Mitoxantrone	Mechlorethamine

Adapted from Meirou and Schenker, 1995; Howell and Shalet, 2001.

Testes cryopreservation

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human
reproduction
update

Options for fertility preservation in prepubertal boys

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Table II Indications for immature testicular cryopreservation in case of malignant and non-malignant disease

Malignant	Non-Malignant
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leukemia• Hodgkin's disease• Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma• Myelodysplastic syndromes• Solid tumors• Soft tissue sarcoma	<p>(1) HSCT in case of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• hematological disorders: thalassemia major, sickle cell disease, aplastic anemia, Fanconi anemia• primary immunodeficiencies• severe autoimmune diseases unresponsive to immunosuppressive therapy: juvenile idiopathic arthritis, juvenile systemic lupus erythematosus, systemic sclerosis, immune cytopenias• osteopetrosis• enzyme deficiency disease: Hurler's syndrome <p>(2) Risk of testicular degeneration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Klinefelter syndrome

HSCT, hematopoietic stem cell transplantation.

Strategies to manage the fertility damage

in vivo protection of SSC:

- obtained or with **hormonal therapies** (gonadotropin-releasing hormone agonists or to stimulate spermatogonia) or with the use of **anti-apoptotic** and / or **cytoprotective** substances.
- Cryopreservation of immature gametes:
 - I) cell suspensions
 - II) tissue fragments

III) Whole Testes

To date not encouraging data in humans.

NEW PROSPECTIVES

- Germ cell transplantation

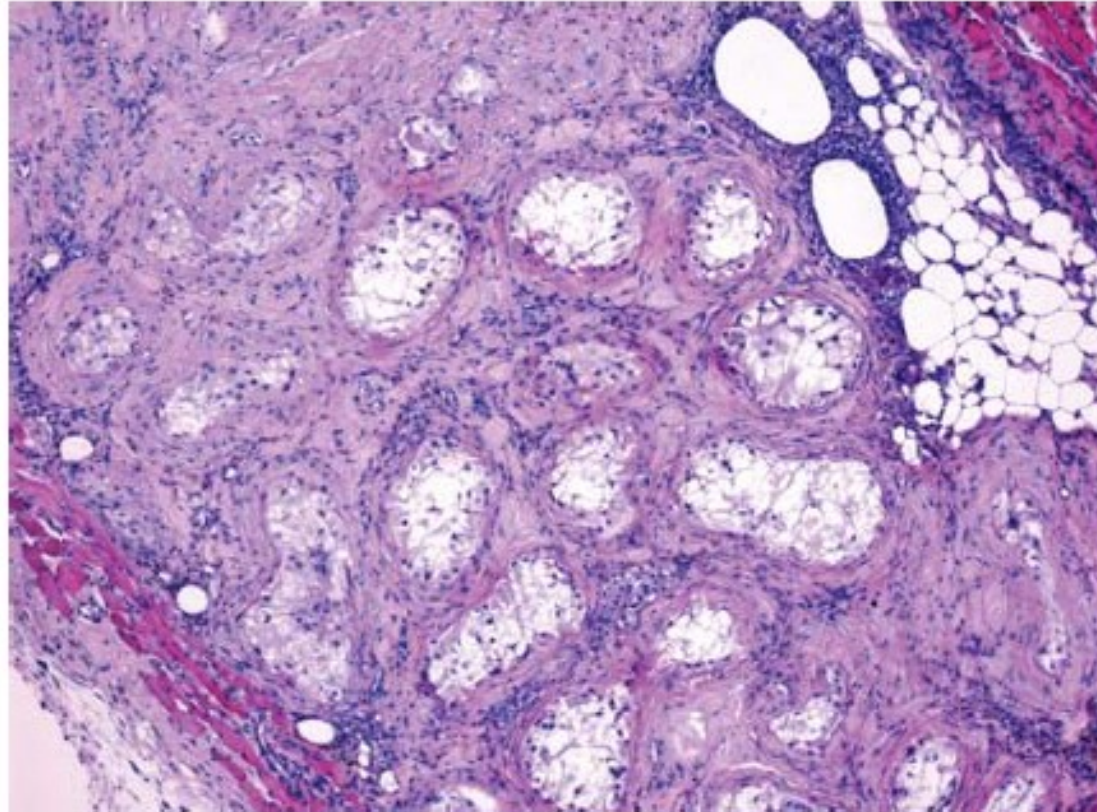


Figure 2 Histological appearance (hematoxylin–eosin sections) of donor testicular tissue from a 44-year-old man after 3 weeks' orthotopic xenografting at x200 magnification. Most tubules show degenerative changes, i.e. sclerosis, while the remaining contain mainly Sertoli cells.

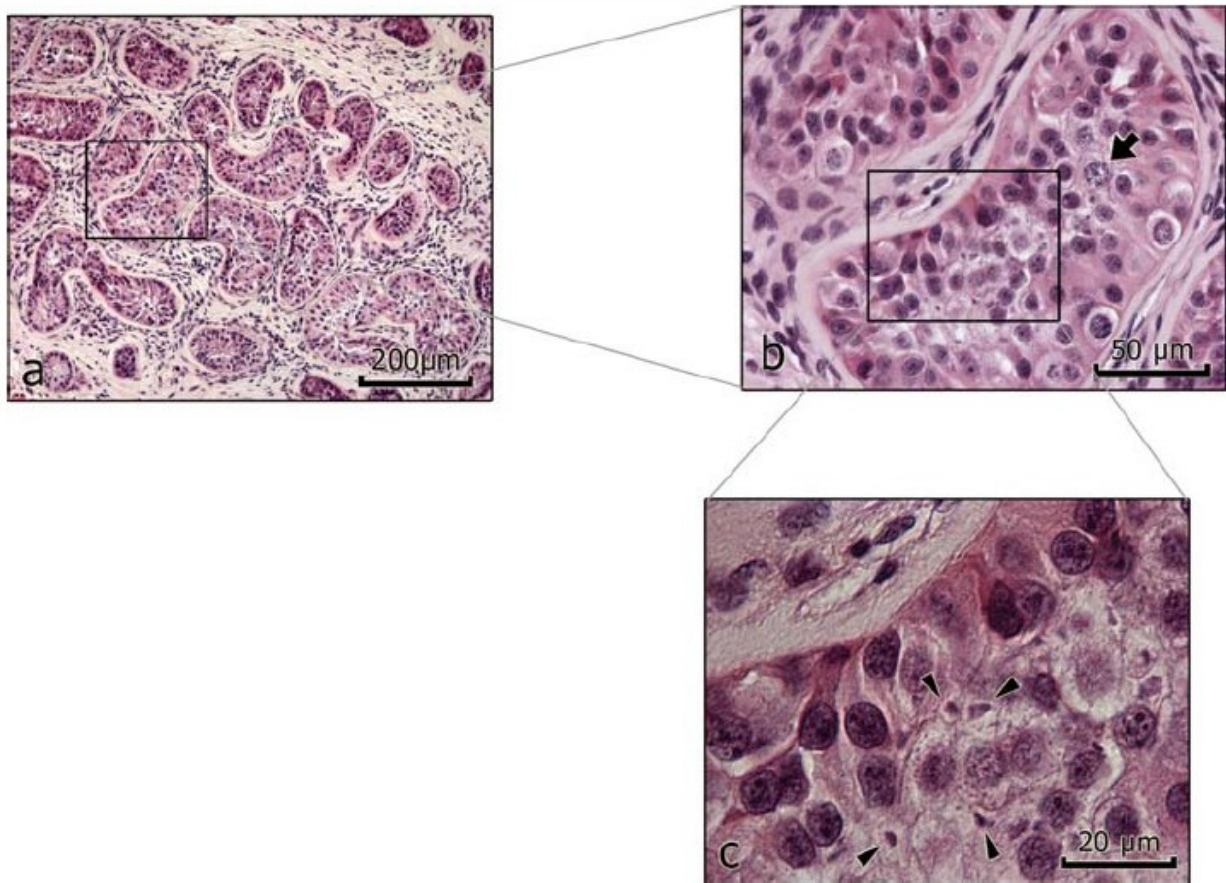
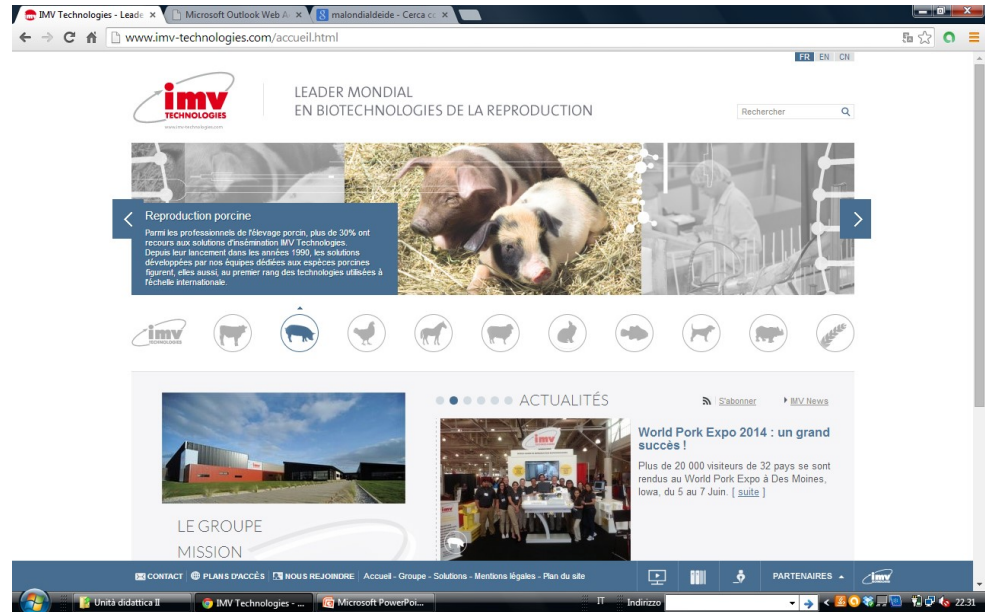


Figure 3 Histological appearance (hematoxylin–eosin sections) of donor testicular tissue from a 12-year-old boy after 6 months' orthotopic xenografting at x200 magnification (a), showing pachytene spermatocytes (arrow) and spermatid-like cells (inset) at x400 magnification (b) and spermatid-like cells at x1000 magnification (c).

Devices



CRIOMOCROSCOPY

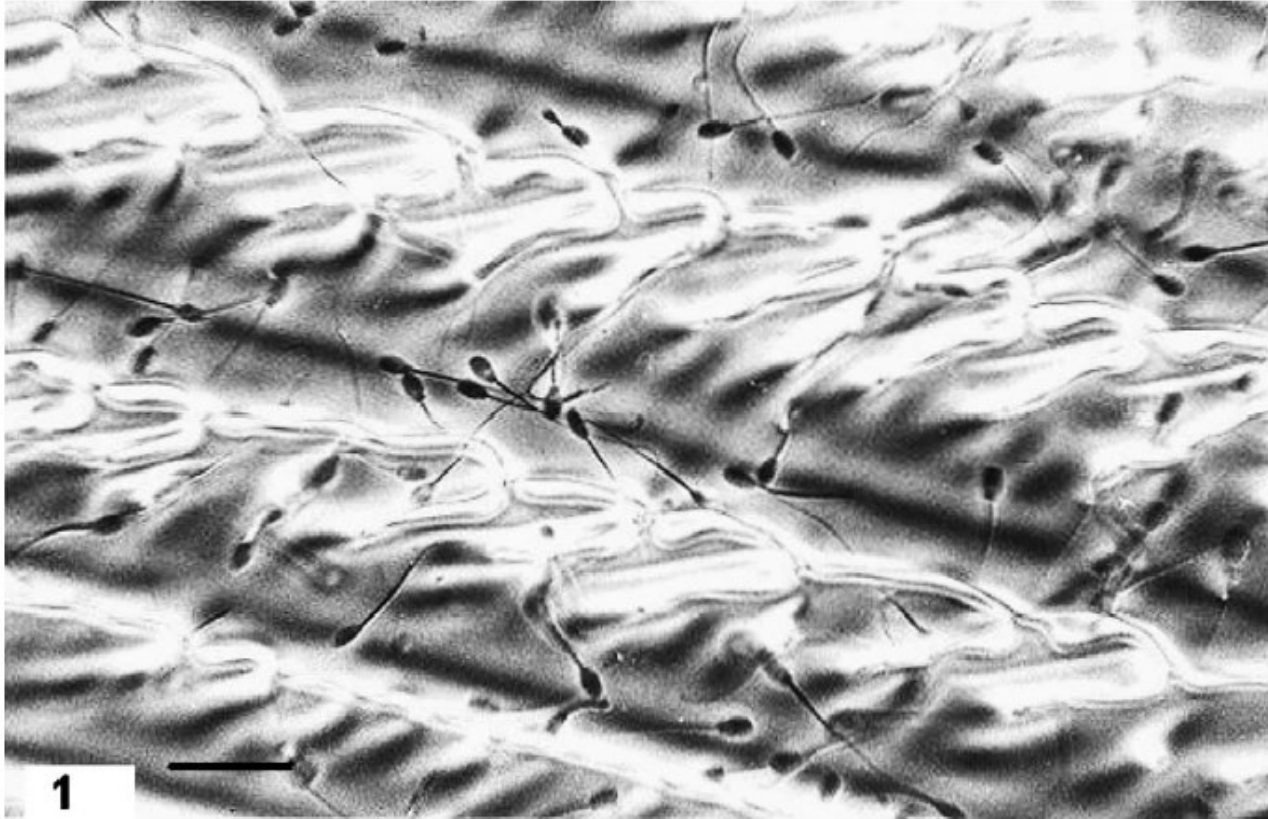


Fig. 1. Photomicrograph of ram spermatozoa diluted in saline media, frozen on the cryomicroscope stage at $10^{\circ}\text{C}/\text{min}$ and viewed at -15°C . Dark diagonal regions indicate zones where the solutes have become concentrated during the freezing process. The intervening brightly contrasted regions are ice crystal formations. It is unclear whether spermatozoa are distributed between or within the ice crystals. Horizontal bar = $25\ \mu\text{m}$.

TESTS

Electronic microscopy

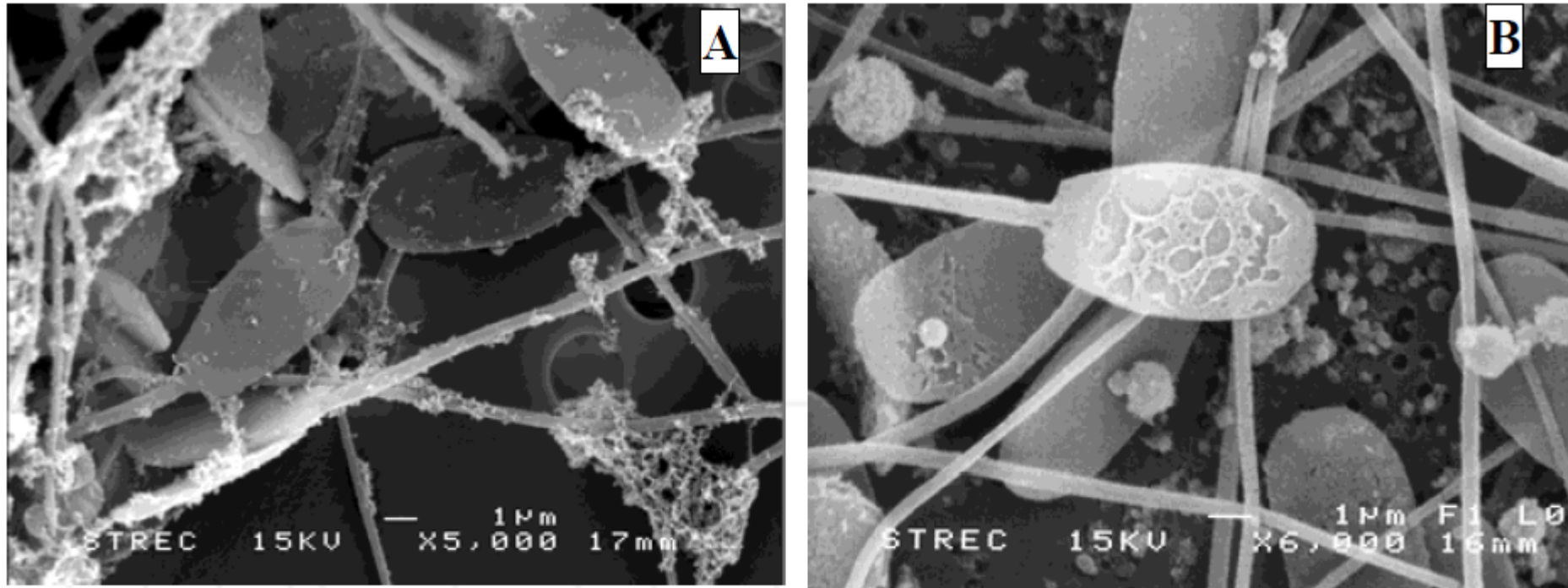


Fig. 2. Scanning electron microscopic (SEM) picture of fresh boar semen with normal plasma membrane (A) as compare with SEM picture of frozen boar semen with plasma membrane damage (B).

Kit Live/Dead

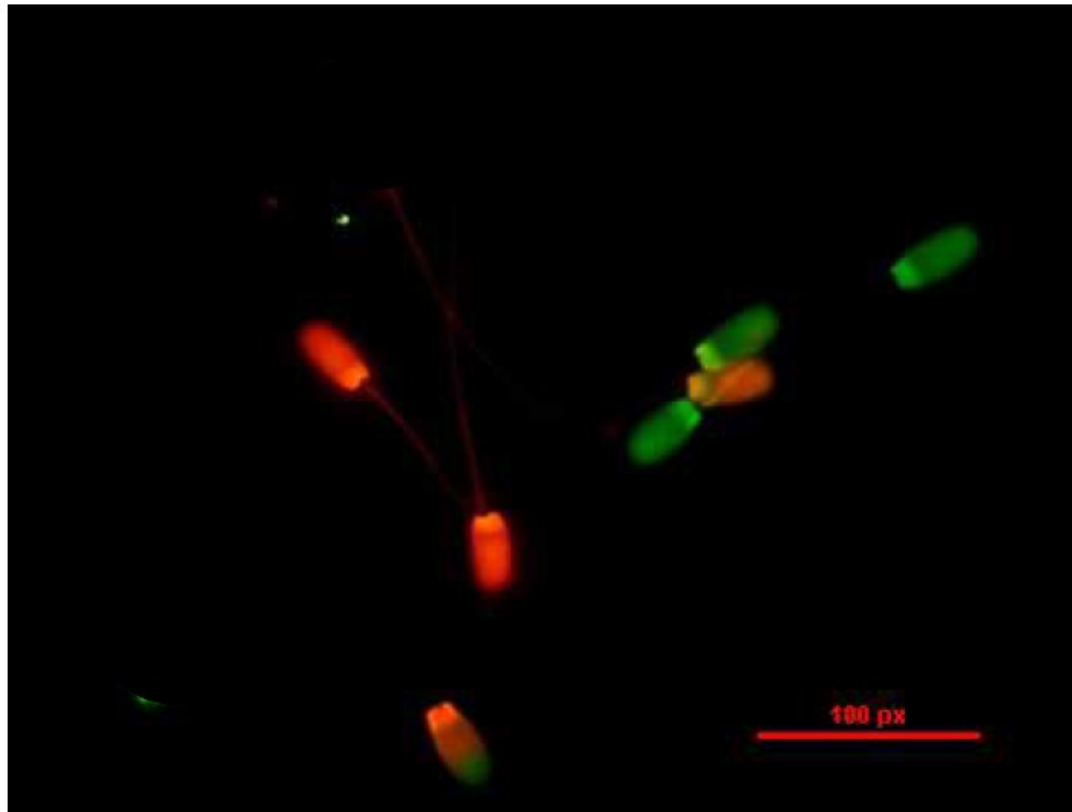
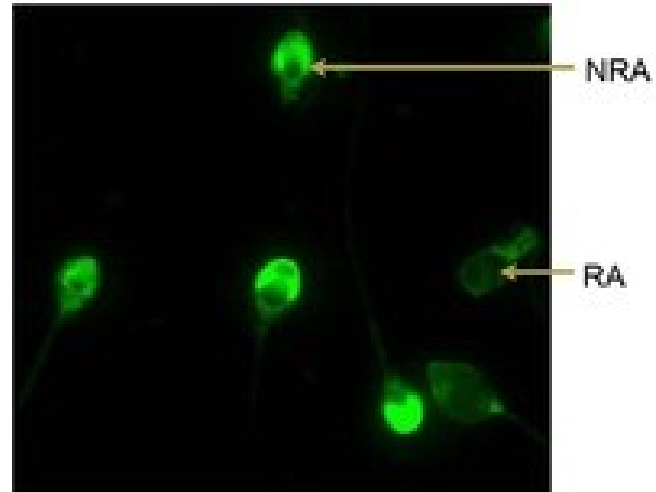


Fig. 3. Spermatozoa stained with SYBR-14/EthD-1 or PI: live spermatozoa stained green with SYBR-14 while dead spermatozoa stained red with EthD-1 or PI.

Acrosome integrity

- PSA

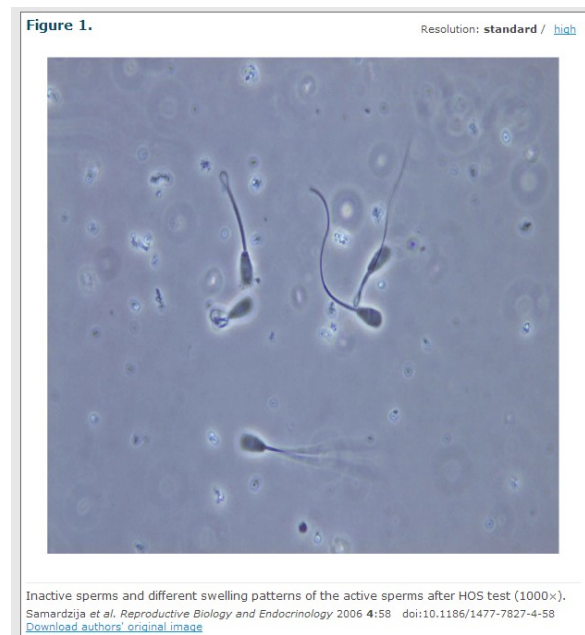


- acrosin

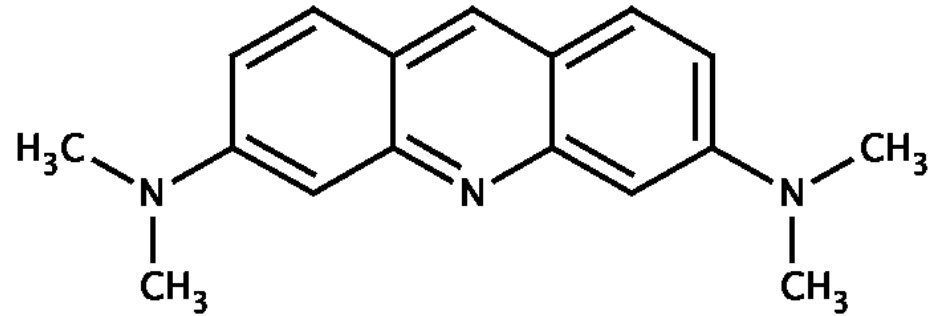
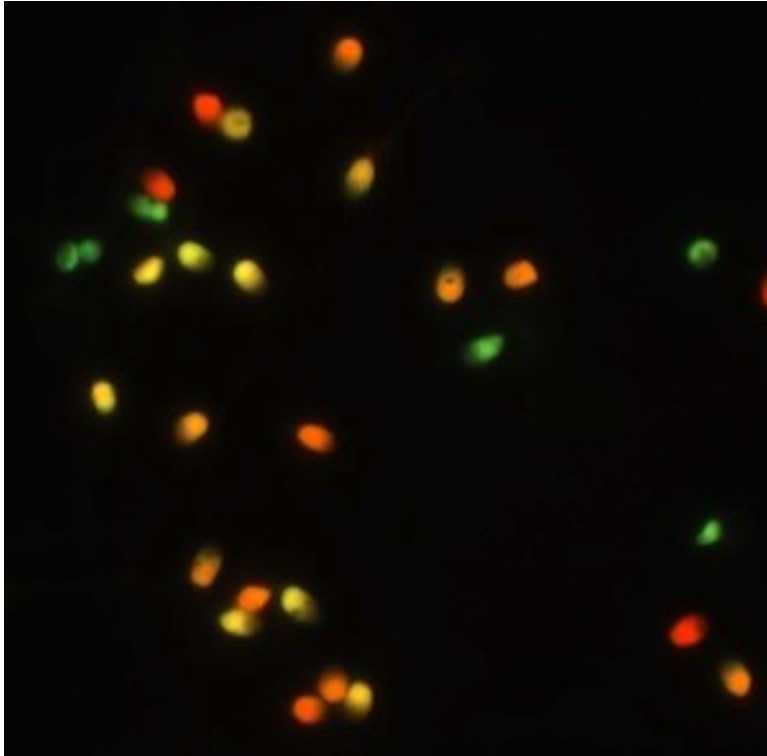


- HOS test

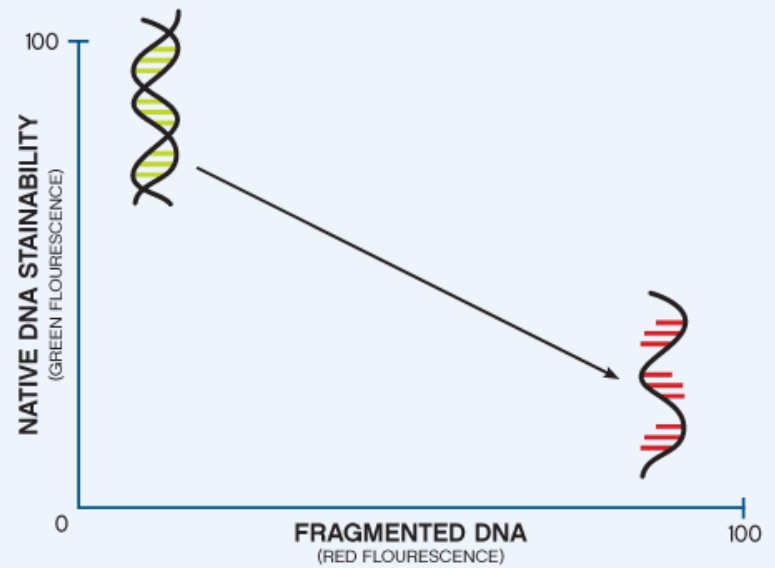
The functional integrity of the sperm plasma membrane will be assessed using a short hypo-osmotic swelling test (sHOST) (Perez-Llano et al., 2001). Spermatozoa are incubated, at 38 °C for 30 min, with 75 mOsm/kg a hypo-osmotic solution that consist of 0.368 % (w/v) Na-citrate and 0.675 % (w/v) fructose (Merck, Germany) in distilled water. Following this incubation time, 200 µl of the semen-hypo-osmotic solution is fixed in 1000 µl of a hypo-osmotic solution plus 5 % formaldehyde (Merck, Germany), for later evaluation. Two hundred spermatozoa are assessed under a phase contrast microscope at 400x magnification. The coiled tail (sHOST positive) spermatozoa found following incubation are functional intact plasma membrane.



Acridine



SCSA® – Acridine Orange Stained DNA



TUNEL - COMET

