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Fertility in focus



AUTUMN
2023

Welcome

By Dr Juliette Koch

Dear Colleagues,

I am excited to take on the role of Medical Director of Northern Territory for Repromed. Supporting people in the Top End with their fertility goals by providing world class health care right here in the NT is a passion of mine.

As a Fertility Specialist and CREI subspecialist based in Adelaide, I am looking forward to my new position. Whilst I will only be visiting Darwin twice a year, I will be taking an active, hands on role with the team by providing leadership and clinical oversight remotely.



A little bit about my background; I trained in Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Sydney at the Royal Hospital for Women and completed a 3 year subspecialty in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility (CREI) in 2012. I have over ten years' experience and am passionate about education, equitable access to care and providing high quality care with realistic goals and shared decision making.

I am pleased to be working alongside Dr Stephanie Girle, Dr Nicola Purser and Dr Namiko Aleker, who all provide excellent care and a wealth of clinical experience. The team of fertility scientists, administration, nurses and counsellors is of the highest quality at Repromed. Our new clinic at Harry's Place is state of the art, and I hope you take the opportunity of reading further about it within this newsletter.

My goals for the future are to make sure my team are always up to date with the latest developments in the field of fertility medicine, and to provide education to other health care providers including GPs and hospital doctors about infertility and the treatment options available.

In May this year I will be visiting Darwin and participating in Repromed's inaugural Reproductive Health Summit. This Summit will cover the gamut of fertility investigations and causes of sub-fertility impacting patients today as well as how genetic testing can help improve the chances of conception.

The session will also include a tour of our new clinic and laboratory, a panel Q&A session as well as attracting 6 hours of educational learning time. Please see page 12 for registration details.

**Best wishes,
Dr Juliette Koch**

**MBBS, FRANZCOG, CREI, MRepM
NT Medical Director – Repromed**



Supporting Alice Springs Patients

This year marks the sixth year that Repromed and Dr Nicky Purser have been visiting Alice Springs. Alice Springs holds a special place in Dr Purser's heart as both her children were born there.

During the past six years our clinic has grown from one day every two months, to two days every month. A testament to the valuable services Dr Purser and Repromed provide to the local community.

Repromed's clinic is located in Bath Street Medical Centre at 69 Bath Street, Alice Springs.

To book an appointment with Dr Purser in Alice Springs, simply call our team on 08 8945 4211.



Congratulations Dr Stephanie Girle!

Known to many around the Territory, Dr Stephanie Girle has over 30 years' of experience working within the field of fertility medicine.

Part of the first Repromed clinic which opened in Darwin in 1994, Stephanie was recently recognised as a 35 Year Diplomat of RANZCOG.

Dr Girle consults from our Darwin clinic and is available for appointments by contacting our team on 08 8945 4211.



Sperm DNA Fragmentation Test

At Repromed, our goal is to do whatever we can to help our patients realise their dream of having a baby.

Part of this is determining what may be contributing to their fertility struggles. When generally speaking about infertility, the focus is often on female factors, however the reality is after a female's age, male factor infertility is the second most common reason a couple may have difficulty conceiving.

A Semen Analysis is the single most important piece of information needed to assess male fertility, and therefore it is crucial to obtain an accurate analysis.

We perform our analysis according to the World Health Organisation's latest criteria which is considered the gold standard in performing a Semen Analysis.

On top of a Semen Analysis Repromed is proud to now be able to offer a test called Halosperm, which determines the health of the DNA in sperm.

Smoking, alcohol, heat, some chemicals and other factors can damage the DNA in cells, including sperm cells. Halosperm allows us to assess any DNA damage in sperm.

The test can be performed in conjunction with a routine Semen Analysis and provides additional information as to the quality of the sperm.

The test is recommended for couples who have repeated IVF failure, poor blastocyst development or for patients who are heavy smokers.

Patients can be referred onto Repromed Darwin by calling 08 8945 4211 or emailing darwin@repromed.com.au



Introducing Dr Namiko Aleker



As a Specialist Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, Dr Namiko Aleker brings her considerable skills to our team at Repromed Darwin.

Dr Aleker graduated from the University of Melbourne, completing her Obstetrics and Gynaecology training in Tasmania, Canberra, Papua New Guinea and the Northern Territory.

She is experienced in all aspects of fertility management and performs clinical procedures including oocyte retrieval, embryo transfers and IUIs.

In addition to her work at Repromed, she holds a public appointment as a consultant at the Royal Darwin Hospital.

Due to her special interest in Paediatric, Adolescent Gynaecology, Dr Aleker also holds an appointment with the Sexual Assault Referral Centre in Darwin.

The future of reproductive healthcare

Harry's Place is a vibrant hub of co-located community, allied health, education, training, and direct care services. Repromed is proud to now be a part of this community.

Repromed is the only non NFP organisation which has been invited to be a part of Harry's Place. This is a testament the vital services we offer Territorians, and the depth in which the Repromed team are ingrained into the fabric of the Top End.

Our new clinic at Harry's Place provides a seamless treatment experience for patients. Patients receive continuity of care at the clinic, with all of their appointments held at one place, and the same patient care team supporting them throughout the journey.

Every element of our world-class clinic has been thoughtfully designed based on patient insights. We've thought about every moment of our patient's fertility journey and every requirement each step of the way.

Located at Harry's Place Administration Building, 1 Willeroo Street, Tiwi, the clinic is in close proximity to Darwin Private Hospital where egg collections occur.

Our state-of-the-art laboratory has been designed so that embryo transfers run smoothly, as our laboratory is linked to our transfer rooms thus reducing any environmental impact on quality.



The Darwin Clinic provides the following services:

- Ovulation tracking
- Intrauterine Insemination (IUI)
- In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF)
- Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI)
- Embryo transfer and frozen embryo transfer (FET)
- Embryo freezing and storage
- Diagnostic semen analysis, including HALO sperm
- Medical and elective sperm freezing and storage
- Donor services (including local and international donor services)
- Medical and elective egg freezing and storage
- Surgical sperm collection
- Supportive counselling
- Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD)
- Pre-implantation Genetic Screening (PGS)
- Minor gynaecological procedures in support of fertility treatment such as IUD insertion and removal, LLETZ - Leep procedure to remove pre-cancerous cells, Laparoscopy, Suction curette and Hysteroscopy polypectomy to remove uterine polyps

Top 10 reasons to consider genetic carrier screening.



Dr Tristan Hardy

MBBS (Hons) MRMed PhD
FRANZCOG FRCPA

Medical Director of Genetics
for the Monash IVF Group

1. Genetic conditions affect one in four hundred babies.

One in 400 babies that are born are affected by a genetic condition. Some genetic conditions are manageable, but others can have more serious outcomes. Knowing your carrier status before conceiving allows you to understand your risk before you're pregnant, so you can work through your options.

2. Genetic carrier screening allows you to understand your options earlier.

If you undergo genetic carrier screening before pregnancy, it gives you time to understand your reproductive options without a time restriction. If you find out that you have an increased risk of having a child with a single gene condition, having time to talk to a fertility clinician or genetic counsellor is incredibly valuable.

3. One in 20 reproductive couples will find out they have a high chance of having a child with a single gene condition.

Of the reproductive couples that undergo genetic carrier screening, one in 20 will discover they have a high chance of having a child with a single gene condition. In this situation, for every pregnancy there is a one in four chance of having a child with the condition they have screened positive for.

4. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists recommends genetic carrier screening.

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) is the leading body for Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in Australia and New Zealand. They recommend that anyone considering pregnancy should be offered genetic carrier screening.

5. The majority of children born with a single gene condition have no other affected family members.

You may not know someone in your family that has a single gene condition – but that does not mean that your children won't inherit a single gene condition from you. Genetic carrier screening will give vital information to make informed decisions about your reproductive options.



6. You can now complete genetic carrier screening at home.

Repromed now offers At-Home Genetic Carrier Screening Tests. Tests can be ordered online and are shipped directly to your home. All you need to do is provide a saliva swab before mailing your completed test back to us. You don't need to come into a clinic for any procedures or tests – the test is completed in the comfort of your own home.

7. Genetic carrier screening is easy and non-invasive.

Repromed's At-Home Genetic Carrier Screening Test just requires a saliva sample using the swab in your kit and mail it back to us. There are no needles or invasive procedures involved.

8. We're all carriers of around three to five genetic conditions.

On average, we're all carriers of around three to five genetic conditions. Most of us aren't aware of this, and most of the time being a carrier doesn't impact your health. About seven out of ten people having genetic carrier screening with us will find out they're a carrier of a single gene condition. Genetic carrier screening allows you to understand the single gene conditions you carry and may pass on to any future children.

9. Genetic carrier screening can be done at any time.

Even if you're already pregnant, you can still undergo genetic carrier screening. It is important to understand that it is different from non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT), which assesses the chance of having a chromosome condition during each pregnancy. If you're not yet pregnant and find out you're a carrier of a single gene condition after completing genetic carrier screening, IVF and genetic testing of embryos may be one of the options offered to you.

10. Repromed's genetics team and clinical team are here to support you.

We understand that genetic carrier screening can raise a lot of questions and concerns. It's important to us that you're supported each step of the way. That's why Repromed's At-Home Genetic Carrier Screening Test, comes with the support of our genetics team, including genetic pathologists and genetic counsellors. They can answer questions and help to understand what test results mean, and what your reproductive options are. We also have a team of fertility clinicians who can help you conceive if you find out you're a carrier of a single gene condition. Our genetics team are lead by our Medical Director of Genetics, Dr Tristan Hardy, who is Australia's only Fertility Specialist, Gynaecologist and Obstetrician who is dually trained as a Genetic Pathologist.

You're not alone, and we're here to help you each step of the way.

To order a kit scan this QR code or visit <https://www.monashivf.com/genetic-testing>



Why you should refer a patient to Repromed for Genetic Carrier Screening?

Your patient and their partner or donor will learn important information about their genetics, which can help them make informed decisions about their options for conceiving.

It's one of the most comprehensive tests on the market – we screen for 410 genetic conditions, and about 1 in 20 reproductive couples who have genetic carrier screening will find out they have an increased chance of having a child with a single gene condition.

You don't need to do anything - our expert genetic counselling team and fertility clinicians are on hand to support the patient every step of the way. If genetic carrier screening reveals that your patient has an increased chance of having a child with a single gene condition, our genetics team will provide them with support and personalised advice about their options.

If the patient does end up needing to test embryos in IVF or find a gamete donor, we're here to help them. We provide comprehensive fertility services, including IVF, preimplantation genetic testing of embryos, donor services and non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT).

No needles or hospitals are required - it's an easy saliva test your patients can do at home.



When to refer

- Female age is < 35 and after 12 months of regular unprotected intercourse
- Female is > 35 and after 6 months of regular unprotected intercourse
- Irregular cycles
- Recurrent miscarriage (> 2 pregnancy losses)
- Genetic conditions
- Premature menopause
- History of PID, Endometriosis, STIs
- Fertility preservation
- Donor Program

How to refer

You can refer to a particular Repromed doctor or you can address the referral to 'Dear Doctor' and our NEw Patient Coordinators (who are all experienced nurses) will allocate a doctor depending on your patient's clinical requirement, location of work or home. If you are referring a couple, please include both patients' names on the referral letter for Medicare rebates

We are proud to offer a complete range of in-house fertility services

Fertility Health Checks

- AMH (Anti-Mullerian Hormone) Test
- Semen Analysis
- Sperm DNA Damage Test
- Ultrasound
- Preconception Genetic Screening

Preliminary Treatments

- Intercourse Timing
- Ovulation Induction
- IUI (Assisted Insemination)

IVF

- IVF (In Vitro Fertilisation)
- Embryo Freezing
- Sperm Retrieval

Preimplantation Genetic Testing

- PGT-A (for aneuploid embryos)
- PGT-M (for single gene disorders)
- PGT-SR (for structural chromosome rearrangements)

Fertility Preservation

- Oncology Related Treatment
- Egg Freezing
- Sperm Freezing
- Embryo Freezing

Third Party Reproduction

- Donor Program - eggs / sperm / embryo

Book your place at our Inaugural Reproductive Health Summit, Darwin.

Hosted by Dr Juliette Koch Medical Director – Repromed NT

We're excited to be hosting our first ever Reproductive Health Summit in Darwin. Please join us for what will be an informative yet relaxed session where we will cover the gamut of fertility investigations and causes of sub-fertility impacting patients today as well as how genetic testing can help improve the chances of conception.

The session will also include a tour of our new clinic and laboratory and panel Q&A session.

Where and When

Saturday 20 May 2023
9am for 9.30am start – 3.30pm

Repromed, Harry's Place
Administration Building,
1 Willeroo Street, Tiwi

RSVP

As places are limited,
please register by 10 May 2023
by scanning this QR code



Speaker Panel

Dr Juliette Koch

MBBS, FRANZCOG, CREI, MRepM
NT Medical Director – Repromed

Alongside her clinical practice and academic profile, Dr Koch is a subspecialist in reproductive endocrinology and infertility. A past lecturer at UNSW and training supervisor for subspecialty training in infertility and endocrinology and a previous Deputy Director of the Department of Reproductive Medicine at the Royal Hospital for Women in Sydney, Dr Koch is well accomplished in the field of fertility management, menopause and gynaecology.

Dr Tristan Hardy

MBBS (Hons), MRMed,
PhD, FRANZCOG, FRCPA
Medical Director Genetics,
Monash IVF Group

Dr Namiko Aleker

BBioMedSci, MBBS,
FRANZCOG, MPH/TM
Fertility Specialist, Obstetrician
and Gynaecologist
Repromed Darwin

Dr Stephanie Girle

MBBS, DRANZCOG,FRACGP
Fertility Clinician
Repromed Darwin

Dr Nicky Purser

MBBS, FRACGP,DRANZCOG
Fertility Clinician

Dr Leanne Pacella-Ince

BHSc (Hons), PhD
Scientific Director
Repromed and Fertility Tasmania
Repromed Darwin

Agenda

9:00am	Registration Welcome coffee & pastries
9:30am	Summit begins: Underlying causes & management of recurrent miscarriage – Dr Juliette Koch
10:15am	Family planning and AMH (Anti-Mullerian Hormone) – Dr Stephanie Girle
11:00am	Break for refreshments
11:15am	Endometriosis and PCOS – common conditions impacting fertility – Dr Namiko Aleker
12:00pm	What is involved in an IVF cycle including possible side effects and complications – Dr Nicky Purser
12:45pm	Break for lunch
1:15pm	Through the lab - the journey of gametes to embryos – Dr Leanne Pacella-Ince
2:00pm	Pre-implantation Genetic Carrier Screening and Pre-implantation Genetic Testing – Dr Tristan Hardy
2:45pm	Panel Q&A
3:15pm	Repromed clinic and laboratory tour
3:30pm	Close

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