

Most Men Wish They Tested Sooner: Preferences for Semen Testing Timing and Setting Among Those Trying to Conceive

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PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

The American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) recommends that male partners undergo semen testing but most men do not have a semen test until late in the fertility journey, if at all. Earlier semen testing, facilitated by the widespread availability of at-home testing, has the potential to identify male-factor infertility and expedite diagnosis and treatment.

We characterized men’s preferences regarding optimal timing and setting of semen testing.

MATERIAL & METHODS

Study design:
Web-based survey administered between March 7-16, 2025.

Inclusion criteria: The survey was administered to 529 men who were:

- 1. Trying to conceive (TTC) or planning to conceive
- 2. Heterosexual
- 3. Aged 25-49
- 4. Living in the US with private health insurance

Data:

- Men who had undergone semen testing reported when, in retrospect, they wished they had tested. Responses were dichotomized into sooner vs not sooner (not sooner included the responses: same time, later, or never).
- Men who had not tested reported their preferred testing location (at-home vs in-clinic).

Analysis:
Data were summarized descriptively.

56% of men who underwent semen testing wish they had tested sooner.

Earlier availability and at-home testing could increase access and utilization.



CONCLUSIONS

The majority of men who underwent semen testing wished they had pursued semen testing earlier. Men who are likely to test in the future are open to at-home testing.

Earlier detection of male infertility can make conception less costly and treatment more efficient. Consequently, men should be offered early semen screening as part of a comprehensive preconception program, and at-home testing has the potential to increase access and utilization.

RESULTS

Out of 529 survey respondents, 189 (36%) had undergone semen testing and 340 (64%) had not tested.

Among respondents who had tested, 36% tested within 1 year of TTC, 47% tested between 1 and 2 years of TTC, 11% tested after more than 2 years of TTC, and 6% were not TTC when they tested.

The majority (56%) wished they had tested sooner, regardless of how long they had been TTC when they tested (Figure 1). Among those with an abnormal test result, 60% wished they tested sooner (Figure 2).

Among respondents who had not tested, 51% were interested in at-home semen testing options.

