



DETAILED STUDY ON HUMAN SEMEN AT GOLD MINE AND NON GOLD MINE AREAS

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KEYWORDS :

INTRODUCTION

Semen gathered large attention in public health system as male infertility is a major issue in infertility studies which remain as a major concern since decades. An infertile couple remains under stress and they are psychologically very much disturbed. In certain societies, childlessness is considered as an insult to the couple, especially to female partner.

Male infertility is not uncommon, which is reported as 40-50 percentage⁹. On the basis of an ultrasound study, Lotti and Maggi²⁹ observed 7% of all men population are infertile. Atig et al.³ opined primary cause of infertility as oxidative stress. More workers are trying to find out the different causes responsible for it^{45,65,67}. Several studies from different parts of the world reported its alarming level as shown below.

Country	Male infertility (%)
Bangladesh ¹⁴	29
France ⁸⁸	35
Israel ¹⁶	28
Pakistan ¹⁰	26
Singapore ³⁹	23
The United Kingdom ¹³	30
West Germany ⁴¹	28
India-Ahmedabad ⁵⁸	64
Ahmedabad ⁷⁰	76
Bengaluru ⁸	35
Delhi ²⁴	84
Jamnagar ³⁷	75
Jamnagar ³²	45
Kolar ³⁷	42
Wardha ²⁵	65
Belagavi ¹²	62

A possible reason for this condition is likely to that our present knowledge on male reproductive system is thirty years behind that of female^{101,102}. Following these reports many workers engaged in finding details of male reproductive system and its secretion. We have contributed minute details of human epididymis⁸⁴.

Pollution present in environment may be a cause for decreasing testicular functions at places^{2,4,15,26-28,33}.

Study on semen from a gold mine area, Kolar and a non-gold mine area, Jamnagar was reported earlier³⁷. This is followed by the present detailed evaluation of semen at these two places.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Normal healthy subjects from Kolar (n=114) and Jamnagar (n=111) were preferred in this study. Their age varied from 25-45 years. Their semen samples were studied.

WHO¹⁰³ prescribed the criteria for normal semen.

Following instructions were given to volunteers,

1. to maintain an abstinence of 3-5 days prior to collection of sample^{50,69,95,96}. The semen volume increases if it is allowed to remain in male system²³. Thus we preferred to have a fixed time period of continence

2. to collect sample between at 8:00 am - 8:30 am. Fixed time is important considering the chronobiological changes taking place in body^{5-7,82} and in the composition of semen during different timings of the day⁹⁵⁻⁹⁸

3. to collect sample onto a clean and sterile glass container provided from the laboratory⁵². Semen examination was done as per the prescribed procedure¹⁰³ and

4. to collect sample by masturbation¹, at a place close to laboratory. The sample submission in short time is important to prevent changes in it. Freund²⁰ opined that semen collected by a person by coitus interruptus or by masturbation was found to have equal in properties of semen. It may not be true as during coitus interruptus one or few drops of semen may be lost. It is also likely such sample may contain a portion of vaginal secretions and other cells. Considering these, we opted the collection of sample by masturbation.

Proper lighting in laboratory and on microscope was done throughout the study. This was in response to a report of Veena et al.¹⁰⁰ showing light has a direct effect on sperm motility.

Within 30 minutes after submission sample was studied³⁰. During this time the semen coagulum liquefies. The Semen examination¹ included its 1) Total volume 2) Liquefaction time 3) pH 4) Viscosity 5) Chemical composition like fructose 6) Total Sperm Count 7) Percentage of Sperm motility and 8) Sperm morphology. In the present study on semen, keeping importance to its total sperm count (40mill/ml), percentage of sperm motility (60%)^{1,17,21,59,99} and total semen volume was also chosen for elaborate analysis.

After completion of this we compiled the results of three major parameters of this study, Total semen volume, Total sperm count and Percentage of sperm motility.

Total sperm count was done as per the method given by

Cannon¹¹. In man the daily output of spermatozoa was measured as 500 million³¹.

Sperm motility evaluation is possible after liquefaction of semen. Sperm motility deteriorates as the time lapses. At 37°C sperm motility was studied by using prepared sample slide, which was studied using percentage system^{19,20}. Majority of laboratories prefer this method²¹.

RESULTS

pH and liquefaction time of all samples were within normal range³⁰.

According to the age of semen supplier's results of the present study is given in Table 1. Graphically results of Semen Volume (Fig 1), Total Sperm Count (Fig 2) and Percentage of Sperm Motility (Fig 3) are presented.

DISCUSSION

Semen study started when sperm was first time seen under lens by Antonie Van Leeuwenhoek in 1677³⁰. Semen study continued since then by several authors. Today semen study is important because this is one of the investigations advised for male partner when a couple reports to a doctor for infertility.

Semen report of a man shows whether he is fertile or infertile.

The structure of a spermatozoa was studied elaborately under electron microscope by several authors.

The seminal plasma secured large attention in which spermatozoa survive and do its function with the support of several organic and inorganic items present in it. Presence of WBC was established in 1986³⁵. In seminal plasma Protein⁸⁹, Glutathione³, Cholesterol⁹⁰, Glucose and fructose³⁴, hormones FSH, LH, Testosterone and Prolactin³⁵ were all recorded.

Interestingly some authors carried out biochemical study of it. Several elements were studied by different groups of workers. This was important as a change in concentration of any of those elements may lead to immotility or death of spermatozoa. We observed different elements present in seminal plasma by using Emission Spectroscope⁵⁴, Direct Couple Plasma Emission Spectroscopy⁶³, Energy Dispersive X-ray analysis of Electron Microscope⁷⁸ and X-ray diffraction study⁷⁴.

Sodium, Potassium and Chloride sluggishly enter into sperm⁴². Some others are restricted its entry into spermatozoa, so remained in seminal plasma. We have reported the level of Sodium^{44,57,61,66}, Potassium^{44,57,61,66}, Calcium^{44,66,92}, Magnesium^{44,66,73,92-98}, Iron^{44,79}, Zinc^{44,46,47,60,62,66,68,69}, Copper^{43,44,53,56,62,64,69,85,91}, Cadmium^{68,72}, Nickel^{44,72}, Chromium^{44,72}, Manganese^{44,72}, Lead^{44,72}, Aluminium⁴⁴, Barium⁴⁴, Cerium⁴⁴, Cobalt⁴⁴, Gallium⁴⁴, Molybdenum⁴⁴, Strontium⁴⁴ and Titanium⁴⁴.

Gold in semen was discovered in 1981⁴⁸. Gold present in food may be entering blood and into semen. We observed gold as an important element for sperm quality and its motility^{44,75,86}. Gold is recognized as an important element in semen for its function. Level of gold in semen of Normal, Oligozoospermia, Aesthenozoospermia, Oligo Aesthenozoospermia and Azoospermia samples were reported^{37,38,40,44,46-49,51,76,77,83}.

The source of gold in semen is shown by employing animal experiments^{71,81,82,87}. Gold was detected in male reproductive organs of Frog⁸⁷, Rat^{81,82} and Guinea pig⁸¹. Our interest in this area made to understand gold is present in reproductive system of female frog⁸⁰.

The present severe study was conducted at two places, Kolar

in the Province of Karnataka which is the major gold mine area of this country and Jamnagar in the Province of Gujarat, a far away place from any gold mine area.

The soil chemistry gives the picture that gold is present more in the soil of Kolar region than non-gold mine places. The element gold like other elements enters the body through intake of water as well as food. Through blood it reaches semen. No study is done to find out the level of gold in food items and blood of people of Kolar. Gold is one of the likely elements promoting spermatogenesis as well as increase in sperm motility.

Level of gold in Suvarna Bhasma (Gold Ash) was reported³⁶. Experimentally it was shown that Gold Ash ("Suvarna Bhasma"), an Ayurvedic preparation, prescribed in Ayurveda for male infertile men, "Suvarna bhasma"(Gold ash)³⁶, leading to increase in sperm motility^{22,83}.

Immediately after ejaculation semen remains in coagulum. This is liquefied in a short period of time. Using the split ejaculation technique, Eliasson and Lindholmer¹⁸ reported secretion of seminal vesicle as responsible for forming coagulum. It is accepted total sperm count as an essential parameter for semen analysis. We have reported existing interdependence between sperm count and percentage of motility⁵⁵. In the present study we have also studied sperm morphology which was normal in all cases.

In the present study, looking into Table 1 and Fig 1, it is seen semen volume was more in Kolar in all age groups when compared to that of Jamnagar. In comparison to that of Kolar region, semen reports from Jamnagar showed inferior in quality of Total Sperm Count and Percentage of Sperm Motility (Table 1). Pollution causes damage to male fertility. Jamnagar is an industrial area. Air and water pollution of this place are recorded. Different heavy metals are present in air. Comparing reports from both regions, Total semen volume, Total sperm count and Percentage of sperm motility are presented (Table 1). The semen was higher in quality from gold mine area than from non-gold mine area (Table 1). The total study showed semen collected from Kolar was better in quality than that from Jamnagar in terms of Semen volume (Fig 1), Total sperm count (Fig 2) and Percentage of sperm motility (Fig 3; Table 1).

In conclusion the semen from normal men of Kolar is better in quality when compared to semen samples from normal men of Jamnagar. It may be concluded that the element gold is present in soil in Kolar and which enters the semen is the likely reason for the better quality of semen with increase in Semen Volume, Sperm Count and better Percentage of Sperm Motility.

Table 1. Semen reports shown according to age

Age (in years)	Area 1 (n=114)			Area 2 (n=111)		
	Volume (in ml)	Total sperm count (mill/ml)	Sperm Motility (%)	Volume (in ml)	Total Sperm Count (mill/ml)	Sperm Motility (%)
20-25	3.5	98.9	72	2.2	53.8	60.6
26-30	3.5	92.5	71	2.7	51.5	61.2
31-35	3.4	93.4	70	2.7	51.1	61.0
36-40	3.3	96.8	74	2.2	58.3	62.00
40-45	3	140.0	90	2.0	60.3	63.5
Average	3.34	104.4	81.14	2.75	55.0	61.62

Area 1. Kolar (Gold Mine Area); **Area 2.** Jamnagar (Non-Gold Mine Area)

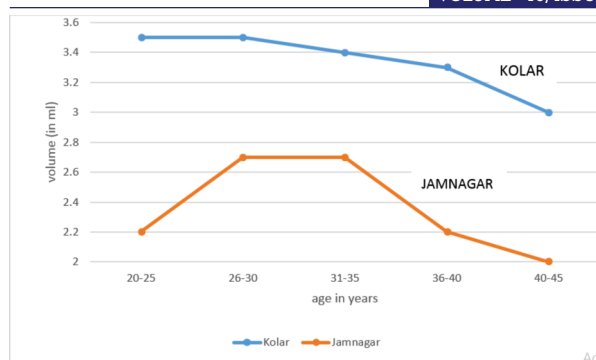


Fig 1: Semen Volume seen in this study

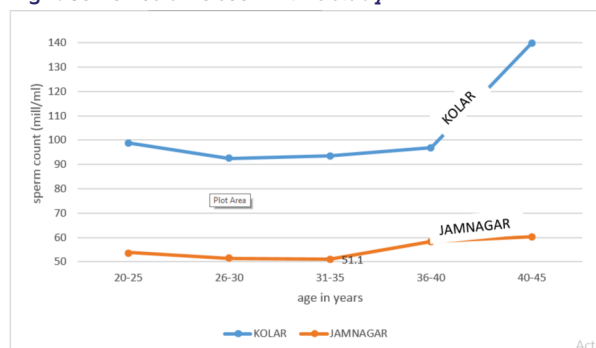


Fig 2: Total Sperm Count (mill/ml) seen in this Study

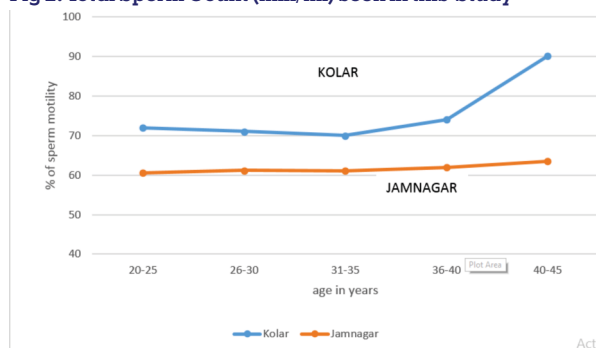


Fig 3: Percentage of Sperm motility seen in this study

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