

Brussels, 12 May 2023 (updated 12 June 2023)

Recommendations

ESHRE has serious concerns regarding the impact of environmental factors on reproductive health and declining fertility rates. In a meeting bringing together experts from various fields, the following recommendations for policymakers were formulated:

1. Urgent political and legislative action is needed in response to the well-established link between widespread infertility and environmental factors.
2. More efficient policies are required to safeguard the public from hazardous chemicals that jeopardize human fertility and reproductive health. We recommend that the European Union rapidly updates the relevant chemical regulations (REACH and CLP) in this legislative term to minimise exposures.
3. Exposure to chemicals and pollutants during fetal life has significant short and long-term effects into adulthood and on next generations. We call for prevention strategies that target both men and women, and start before conception.
4. We recommend that the public is informed and made aware of the potential (high) risks of occupational exposure to chemicals at preconception stage, both in men and women in their workplace.
5. We recommend the development of a Europe-wide digital platform to collect harmonized surveillance data. This would enable monitoring of environmental exposure and its effect on reproductive and offspring health.
6. We recommend raising public awareness of the risks of environmental exposures on reproductive health. This should be done through supporting and organizing public health campaigns and across all educational levels.
7. Current testing of pharmaceuticals and industrial chemicals focuses on pregnancy, but is not sensitive enough to identify the effects on fertility and gametes. We recommend that thorough evaluation of reproductive effects is made part of standard testing for pharmaceuticals and industrial chemicals before they are introduced into the European market.