Welcome to the April–June 2021 issue of the Journal of Human Reproductive Sciences. It comes with a wish that all of you are safe and busy communicating the strategies for COVID-19 vaccination to couples awaiting fertility treatments. This issue is an interesting blend of articles addressing various aspects of male and female infertility.

A timely review by Dr. Mulawkar et al. provides a critical overview of the relevance of Andrologists in the era of assisted reproductive technology. It is an eye-opener in this era, where the male partner’s role is often reduced to a sperm provider. The article by Olanrewaju et al. in Wistar rats addresses the toxic effect of aluminum on testicular function and its amelioration with Quercetin, an antioxidant. The article by Pujianto et al. provides an insight into the impact of oxidative stress on sperm function in an in vitro study. A study by Shemshaki et al. evaluates an association between various biochemical markers in the seminal fluid and oxidative stress through the application of machine learning. It alerts us to the well recognized but not often addressed role of obesity in male factor infertility.

An article on adolescent polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) by Sharan et al. addresses the possibility of using Irisin, a biomarker for diagnosis of PCOS and identifying insulin resistance. However, attractive may be the use of a new biomarker in this challenging group; its clinical application should be preceded by rigorous evaluation in research settings, in view of the far-reaching implications of a diagnosis of PCOS in adolescents. Another study by Rajendiran et al. evaluates the role of angiopoietin-2 in the prediction of clomiphene resistance in infertile women with PCOS. Although interesting, whether incorporation of such a marker in the management has any impact on current practice and reduces the time to pregnancy in women with PCOS will influence its clinical utilization.

Intrauterine insemination (IUI) continues to be an important treatment option in infertile couples for varied indications. Gurunath et al. explore the use of pooled consecutive semen samples for IUI in oligospermic men and report similar pregnancy rates to those with a total motile sperm concentration in excess of 5 million. Adequately powered prospective studies replicating such results would help to identify the value of such an intervention in the management of male infertility. A randomized-controlled trial by Wadhwa et al. explores the possible benefits of intrauterine instillation of human chorionic gonadotropin before IUI and report a significant improvement in pregnancy rates in the first treatment cycles. Even though the results are impressive, such intervention should be strictly of research interest until further studies confirm its beneficial effect.

This issue has an interesting article by Soriano et al. addressing the effect of various commercially available vaginal lubricants and ultrasound gels on sperm motility in vitro. It highlights the need for awareness among clinicians of the contents of these gels and also the need for in vivo studies for a safe choice of these gels and lubricants. A retrospective analysis by Patel et al. of fresh embryo transfers in oocyte recipients addresses the importance of endometrial thickness and duration of estradiol supplementation in hormone replacement therapy cycles. However, as the authors have concluded, an important limitation is the noninclusion of cycles, which did not reach embryo transfer in the analysis. This may have led to an overestimation of the impact of the studied parameters on the treatment outcome.

The study by Singhal et al. alerts us toward the need for both endocrine and karyotypic evaluation of men with nonobstructive azoospermia, for appropriate prognostication and to identify any risk of inheritance of infertility by offspring. A study by Bose et al. looks at stress and quality of life parameters in couples with primary infertility and identifies a gender-based difference in the studied parameters. It highlights the need for addressing these issues as a part of holistic management strategies in infertile individuals and couples. An article by Frikha et al. highlights the importance of cytogenetic screening in couples who experience two or more miscarriages.

This issue has two case reports on ectopic pregnancies – bilateral tubal ectopic pregnancy and an ovarian pregnancy by Iwe et al. and Singh et al., respectively. Both these case reports bring forth the challenges involved in the diagnosis of these rare but potentially life-threatening problems to our attention.

Need for estimation of macroprolactin, an inert molecule in those with persistent hyperprolactinaemia but without corroborating clinical or investigative findings is well documented in a case report by Gautam et al.
Siegel et al. report for the first time an occurrence of optic neuritis following IVF and FET and alert us to the rare possibility of immune disorders following assisted reproductive treatments. However, whether a causal association exists can only be confirmed by vigilant observation and reporting of such occurrences.

Finally, two brief communications summarize the evidence on increased susceptibility of women with PCOS to severe COVID-19 and consequently the need to prioritize vaccination to this subgroup of women.

I take this opportunity once again to draw the attention of prospective authors to incorporate details of ethics committee approval and statements on adherence to appropriate research ethics in studies on human and animal subjects in their manuscripts. Similarly, all interventional studies should have been prospectively registered in a clinical trial registry. These are mandatory requirements without which the manuscripts will not undergo external peer review. For further details, please refer to the journal website: www.jhrsonline.org.

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