Dear Editor,

I read the recent publication on lead and infertility with a great interest. Awadalla, et al, concluded that “semen quality of men with primary infertility does not have any correlation with BLL [blood lead level] at the cutoff value of 20 µg/dL.” I have some concerns on this work. Firstly, this work assessed only one parameter—lead—hence, it cannot be conclusive since the subjects might have been exposed to many other things that can result in impairment of sperm quality. Secondly, looking at the blood lead level determination, the clarification on the quality control is required since the blood lead determination usually has the problem of interference.

Conflicts of Interest: None declared.

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References


Author’s Reply

Dear Editor,

Regarding Dr. Wiwanitkit’s inquiry about considering other confounders that can result in impairment of sperm quality, we did our best to minimize these confounders by proper selection of studied patients through setting appropriate inclusion criteria to include those with primary infertility, absence of female factor for infertility, absence of medical and surgical causes of infertility such as diabetes mellitus, urinary tract infection, sexually-transmissible diseases, a history of chemotherapy or radiotherapy, varicocele, undescended testes, small testes or testicular injury. However, we did not test for other heavy metals possibly affecting infertility like mercury and cadmium due to logistic limitations. We therefore recommend conduct of further studies with considering this limitation.

Regarding the blood lead level determination, quantitative measurement of blood lead level using the graphite furnace technique with Zeeman background correction, the technique used in our study is widely accepted for toxicological and nutritional screening with adequate diagnostic accuracy.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude for your comments, hoping that I was able to clarify them.

Conflicts of Interest: None declared.

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