Introduction to the Male Half of Reproductive Biology

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About Me

• Attended Wilmington HS (2 yrs) and graduated from Charter School of Wilmington in 1998 (yes, I am OLD!!!)

• University of Delaware, B.S. in Biology (2003)

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Words that may make you snicker

sperm, sexual, testes, scrotum, egg, penetration, reproduction
Why Study Sperm Biology?

- One in six couples are infertile.
- In 40 per cent of cases the problem lies exclusively with the male, known as Male Factor Infertility.
- One in 25 males have a low sperm count, and one in 35 are sterile.
- With appropriate treatment, many couples struggling with male factor infertility are able to conceive.
Sexual Reproduction

• Occurs when two gametes (sperm + egg, 1N or ½ genome) combine genetic material (DNA) to form a zygote (embryo, 2N or 1 genome)

• Recombination permits genetic flexibility within a population (can lead to evolution)

• Offspring have characteristics from both parents as well as those unique from parents
Sperm production is known as spermatogenesis.

Five mitotic divisions produce 16 primary spermatocytes from a single cell.

Two meiotic divisions produce 64 spermatids.
Mitosis (2N (46 chromosomes) to 2N) must occur to create many cells from a single cell.

Meiosis (2N to 1N (23 chromosomes)) must occur to divide DNA in half.
After meiosis, sperm dramatically change shape
Testes and Epididymis

Spermatogenesis occurs in the seminiferous tubules of the testes

Sperm maturation occurs in the epididymis
Immature Sperm
(Immobile, lack important proteins)

Mature Sperm
(Mobile, gained important proteins)
Mammalian Fertilization

- Oocyte
- zona pellucida
- cumulus cells
Thank You!