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The Presence of Spermatozoa in the Semen of Vasectomized Men

MATTHEW J. FREUND¹ AND MARGARET COUTURE¹

¹ *Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey/New Jersey School of Osteopathic Medicine, Camden, New Jersey*

Repeated semen specimens were examined from 24 men who had been vasectomized for periods of time ranging from two to 31 years. Five-micron filters were used to collect the spermatozoa in each specimen. Sperm were found in 62 of the 63 semen specimens received from the 24 men and in at least one specimen from each of the men. The mean number of sperm per specimen was 126.29 (SE = ±32.73) and the range was from 8 to 2096 sperm per specimen. These data demonstrate the presence of a small number of spermatozoa in the semen of 24 vasectomized men and suggest that this is a normal or usual sequela of vasectomy. Additionally, hundreds to thousands of sperm fragments were noted for each intact sperm that was identifiable as such. The data suggest that sperm are passed from the epididymis to the urethra through (or past) the site of vasectomy by a mechanism that differs in degree from that of "recanalization." The term "microrecanalization" is proposed for this mechanism.

Key words: vasectomy, sperm, follow-up, recanalization, microrecanalization, sperm reappearance

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