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A smart way to screen male infertility

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Although male infertility is as common as female infertility, it often goes undiagnosed because of socioeconomic factors such as stigma and high cost of testing.

Male infertility affects up to 12% of the world's male population and is linked to various environmental and medical conditions. The current methods employed for male fertility testing are either manual microscope based and or the computer assisted semen analysis. These techniques are labor intensive, expensive and require proper laboratory facilities.

A team of researchers at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School, have devised a portable instrument that can quantify sperm concentration and motility in a few seconds. This device, referred to as Fertilex, uses the processing power and camera found in the commonly available smartphones. It is user friendly and does not require any prior training for its operation.

The researchers observed that all samples analyzed on this device gave 98 percent accurate results. It is an excellent platform that can be used for detecting any abnormality related to the semen. This smartphone-based fertility test could also be used by men to monitor their semen at home after undergoing vasectomies, or as a point-of-care diagnostic tool in developing countries.