Author's response to reviews

Title: Decreasing sperm quality: a global problem?

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed the revised manuscript “Decreasing sperm quality: a global problem?” for submission to the BMC Public Health (Debate article). The manuscript has been modified according to the comments of the reviewers.

Reviewer Dora Loria:

Comment 1a: references 2 and 3 have been replaced (please see page 3)
Comment 1b: the (d) and (e) symbols have been deleted (please see page 3)
Comment 2: a quotation mark is now included (please see page 7, first paragraph)
Comment 3: the confounders mentioned by Jorgensen et al. are listed in the manuscript (please see page 11)

Reviewer Dora Loria and Stefano Rosso

Both reviewers discussed figure 1 (Swan et al. 2000, reference No. 3) and mentioned that the linear regression approach might not be the best method to investigate “differently clustered studies”.

Hence, the authors of this manuscript included a further paragraph on “Statistical considerations” (please see page 9).
All comments of the reviewers have been considered and the changes in the revised manuscript are indicated in the text (yellow colour).

One reviewer asked, if the authors of the debate article have permission of Swan et al. (2000) to publish figure 1. In the legend to figure 1 we state clearly that “Figure 1 is derived from Swan et al”. Furthermore, figure 1 is available via http://www.ehponline.org/members/2000/108p961-966swan/swan-full.html. So, we request some guidance from the editor on the need to obtain a copyright from Swan et al.?

All authors read and approved the final manuscript. No conflict of interest of any of the authors has to be declared. The authors will be very pleased, if the manuscript would be accepted.

Sincerely yours

Hiltrud Merzenich