

**Stephen Harbottle, BSc.**

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ZILOS Generates Bountiful Fertility Rates

In the business of enhancing fertility, success is infrequent. At the Glasgow Nuffield Hospital Assisted Conception Unit, pregnancy rates are among the highest in the field. An important factor in the hospital's achievement is the ZILOS. *Before the lab introduced the ZILOS, the frozen embryo transfer (FET) success rate among women under 38 years old was less than 15%. With the aid of the ZILOS, the success rate jumped to 41%!*

Senior Embryologist Steve Harbottle and his colleague, Jackie Robinson, run the lab in which roughly 120 frozen human embryos are transferred to the womb each year. One side effect of freezing embryos is the hardening of the zona pellucida, which can make hatching more difficult. To overcome this hurdle, they use the ZILOS to "nick" the zona to assist in embryo hatching and promote implantation.

As the longest standing private assisted conception center in Scotland, the Glasgow Nuffield Hospital has an enviable reputation. The highly experienced embryology staff are always looking at ways to improve the quality of their clinical work. When Harbottle proposed offering assisted hatching to patients, he and Robinson decided that the laser method was the most effective. The laser did not generate the damage rate of the Acid Tyrode's method or

the unpredictable outcome of the mechanical method.

According to Harbottle, "We looked at three different systems, and decided that the ZILOS was the best system on the market for our needs. It's very compact, fitting into the limited space we had available, without being cumbersome. *The software is very user friendly, and allows a virtual gallery of images to be stored, for review or audit purposes. There are a number of novel features, including the Clinical and Research modes, which allow a great deal of control and precision throughout the procedure. The system is robust, and the laser is not knocked out of alignment if the system is moved or inadvertently knocked.*"

Harbottle continues, "The ZILOS is a Class 1 laser product, and as such there is no special training required for the operators (in the UK). This was a very important factor in our selection process, as the main competitor's prod-

uct was at the time a class 3B product and would have required a lot more training and paperwork prior to and after installation. The ZILOS is completely PC driven, and is operated by a mouse, making it very comfortable to use by anyone who is computer literate."

He has favorable words for the company, as well. "Hamilton Thorne is a very personable company. I think that is reflected in the fact that Mr. Diarmaid Douglas Hamilton himself came to visit us and examine our system after our

results had dropped for a month or so. (Dust caused by construction turned out to be the source of the problem.) Not many companies would do that for a customer!"

Our thanks to Elena Jeffery of Microm (UK) for recommending Stephen Harbottle for this month's Customer Profile.

NOTE: The ZILOS and ZILOS-tk are for non-clinical research use only in the USA.



Embryo Zona Drilling Using the ZILOS
(Image Courtesy Stephen Harbottle)