ADDENDUM: COVID 19 VACCINATION

The Pfizer BioNTech vaccine against COVID-19 has been given authorisation for temporary supply by the UK Department of Health and Social Care and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency for active immunization to prevent COVID-19 disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 virus in individuals aged 16 years of age and over. A vaccination programme has commenced, with priority groups identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccines and Immunisation (JCVI).

We advise clinics to be mindful of advice from JCVI and the RCOG concerning the vaccine and pregnancy. At present, owing to lack of systematic data, JCVI have taken a precautionary approach and state that women should be advised not to come forward for vaccination if they may be pregnant or are planning a pregnancy within three months of the first dose (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-2-december-2020/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-2-december-2020).

It is expected that access to the vaccine will allow vulnerable patient groups to be able to access fertility treatment that may have been paused during the pandemic. It will also help clinics develop resilience among their workforce by reducing the likelihood of illness and the need to self-isolate.

The use of any pharmaceutical product in women who are trying to conceive should be subject to a balance between the expected benefit and potential harms. Women who would benefit from the vaccine should be able to receive it without compromising their planned fertility treatment. Where a decision is taken to delay treatment due to vaccination, centres should work with commissioners of services to ensure that patients’ eligibility for funded treatment does not suffer due to the delay.