

REVIEW

**Ageing and infertility: an overview**

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**Abstract**

In many modern societies, the proportion of women who delay childbearing beyond the age of 35 years has increased greatly in recent decades. They are falsely reassured by popular beliefs that advances in new reproductive technologies can compensate for the age-related decline in fertility, but science cannot beat the biological clock. Age is the single most important determinant of male and female fertility, either natural or treated. The consequences of advancing maternal age are not only for the risk of natural and assisted conception, but also for the outcome of pregnancy. Female fertility has a 'best-before date' of 35, and for men, it is probably before age 45–50.

**Keywords:** *Ageing, assisted reproduction, delayed childbearing, fertility, infertility*

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