

The sperm and the egg



One day Rosie Egg and Rodney Sperm met at the uterus, a popular hangout for sperm and eggs. While discussing their journey, they found each other's story quite exciting in respect to the organs and process involved in reaching the same hotspot.

Rosie began her story by naming the female external sex organs, which provides protection to the vaginal opening as well as sexual stimulation and excitement. These included the vulva, the Mons Veneris, the Labia Majora, the Labia Minora, the Vestibule, the Urethral and Vaginal openings, and the Perineum (Rathus, Nevid, & Fichner-Rathus, 2005).

She also shared with Rodney that a female is born with about two million immature egg cells in which about 400, 000 may survive into puberty in a thin capsule, but only about 400 will ripen from puberty to menopause, releasing one per month for possible fertilization." Rodney responded, "Wow, like the female the male testicles can produce about 1, 000 sperm a second or about 30 billion a year, with 10 to 20 ejaculations holding enough sperm to populate the Earth" (Rathus, Nevid, & Fichner-Rathus, 2005).

She continued by explaining, " The vagina is a passageway where a penis lays during sexual intercourse as well as a passageway from the uterus for menstrual flow and babies during delivery. It will expand in length and width during all of these events to allow enough room to hold a penis, insert a tampon, and deliver a baby" (Rathus, Nevid, & Fichner-Rathus, 2005).

Rodney interrupted her and said with excitement, " a penis is where I came from! The penis serves as a passageway through the urethral meatus in which urine and semen exit through an opening in the tip of penis. The base

of the penis, extends into the pelvis, and attaches to the pelvic bone. The body of the penis or penile shaft, is free-swinging and loose. It contains three cylinders that fill up with blood causing it to swell and stiffen, which is also known as an erection, during sexual arousal or excitement" (Rathus, Nevid, & Fichner-Rathus, 2005).

Rosie responded, " That's amazing, The cervix lies between the vagina and the lower end of the uterus. The cervix produces secretion that contributes to the vagina's chemical balance. It has a small opening about the size of a straw that expands allowing sperm to pass through from the vagina to the uterus as well as allowing a baby to move from the uterus to the vagina during child birth" (Rathus, Nevid, & Fichner-Rathus, 2005).

Rodney explained, " the scrotum, a pouch of loose skin that becomes lightly covered with hair as you move into puberty, is located beneath the penis. It contains two compartments that hold testes, which are held in place with a spermatic cord. The scrotum also contains the vas deferens, which is a thin tube about 16 inches long that serves a pathway for mature sperm. The scrotum also contains blood vessels, nerves, and the cremaster muscle, which raises and lowers the testicle inside the scrotum in response to the change in temperature and sexual stimulation" (Rathus, Nevid, & Fichner-Rathus, 2005).

Rosie continued, " The ovaries are two almond shaped organs, are about 1 ½ inches long and lay on either side of the uterus attached by ovarian ligaments. This is where egg cells, like me, are made as well as the female sex hormones estrogen and pro-estrogen. The fallopian tubes are about four

inches long and extend from top of the uterus to the ovaries. Egg cells like me, pass through the fallopian tube on the way to the uterus. The fallopian tube is not just a way to reach the uterus, it also nourishes, guides and propels the egg cells through the tube with the cilia (tiny hair-like projections) at about one inch per day. Egg cells have one to two days to be fertilized after release into the infundibulum, the part of the uterus not attached to the ovaries" (Rathus, Nevid, & Fichner-Rathus, 2005).

Rodney continued, " The testes serve two functions, they secrete sex hormone (androgens) or testosterone and produce mature germ cells, or sperm. Each testicle is divided into many lobes, filled with many winding semi-niferous tubules. Spermatogenesis, a threadlike structure produces and stores hundreds of billions of sperm over a lifetime. Sperm cells develop through several stages and takes about 72 days for the testes to manufacture a mature sperm cell. Each sperm cell in the early stages is known as spermatocytes and contains 46 chromosomes including one X and one Y sex chromosomes, these spermatocytes divide into two spermatids, each containing 23 chromosomes half being X sex chromosomes and half Y sex chromosomes. When the chromosomes from the father's sperm combine with the chromosome from the mother's egg the offspring will have the combined 46 chromosomes. Among the 23 chromosomes in the sperm cell is one X and one Y sex chromosome but of the 23 chromosomes in the egg cell only one X sex chromosome exists. If the union of a X and a Y sex chromosome exist the result will be a male offspring and if the union is that of two X sex chromosomes, the result will be a female offspring" (Rathus, Nevid, & Fichner-Rathus, 2005).

Rosie was amazed and continued to explain how she ended up at the uterus, “ the uterus is where fertilized egg cells implant themselves and develop until it is time to be born. It contains three layers of lining beginning with endometrium, which is richly supplied with blood and glands. The endometrial tissue is discharged through the cervix and vagina during menstruation. The second layer is myometrium, which allows the uterus flexibility and strength to create the powerful contractions needed to push the fetus out during labor and the third layer is preimetrium, provides an external cover” (Rathus, Nevid, & Fichner-Rathus, 2005).

They looked deep into each other’s eyes and came together resulting in the fertilization and implantation in the hottest spot around. If all goes well a boy or girl will soon arrive.

Reference

- Rathus, S. A., Nevid, J. S., & Fichner-Rathus, L. (2005). Human Sexuality in the World of Diversity. (Sixth Edition) Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Retrieved March 8, 2010 from Axia College, Week One, Psy 265- Psychology of Human Sexuality Course Website.