

Biosketch--Dr. John C. Herr

Dr. Herr is a cell and developmental biologist with an interest in reproductive biology and contraceptive development. His laboratory at the University of Virginia Medical School works on the proteomics and genomics of spermiogenesis and oogenesis. The lab has recently identified several novel proteins unique to the sperm and to the oocyte and early embryo, and is interested in developing small molecule contraceptives to these proteins.

Dr. Herr is an active inventor having named more than 35 genes in the human genome and applied for patents on their use as diagnostic or therapeutic targets. In addition to basic science studies his laboratory conducts translational research with the intent of moving discoveries into products. For example, based on identification of a soluble testis specific biomarker, SP-10, found in the sperm acrosome, his laboratory recently developed the first FDA approved point-of-care immunodiagnostic tests for detecting male infertility and low numbers of sperm, SpermCheck® Fertility and SpermCheck® Vasectomy. The former test is useful in helping couples identify male factor infertility in the privacy of the home while the second product is useful in monitoring declines in sperm count after vasectomy or in men using male contraceptives. He is CEO of a start-up, ContraVac Inc, spun out of the University of Virginia Patents Foundation to commercialize SpermCheck technology.

Dr. Herr attended Grinnell College and Stanford University as an undergraduate, received his PhD from the University of Iowa in 1978 and was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Washington from '78-'81. Since '81 Dr Herr has been at Virginia where he is Professor of Cell Biology, Professor of Urology, Professor of Biomedical Engineering, founder and Director of the Lymphocyte Culture Center, and directs the Center for Research in Contraceptive and Reproductive Health. He is also program director for a postdoctoral program funded by the NIH Fogarty International Center that seeks bilateral cooperation and collaborations with Indian Scholars. He also serves as a member of the INDO-US Joint Working Group, a commission of scientists and governmental officials working to develop scientific exchange and development in India.