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# Push to harvest testicular tissue

By **JULIA MEDEW**  
HEALTH EDITOR

TESTICULAR tissue should be taken from boys with cancer so scientists can create sperm for them with stem cell technology later, a German expert says.

Professor Stefan Schlatt, director of the Centre for Reproduction and Andrology at the University of Munster, yesterday told a conference in Melbourne that he hoped to create sperm from stem cells within testicular tissue to help boys rendered infertile through cancer treatments.

He said researchers had been investigating the behaviour of germ line stem cells in testes to see if they could be used to create sperm for

transplants into testes or for the use of IVF (in vitro fertilisation).

Professor Schlatt said the technique, being researched in animals, would be particularly useful for boys diagnosed with cancer because they cannot provide sperm samples before treatment that could make them infertile. A better understanding of these stem cells could also lead to new treatments for other forms of male infertility.

Professor Schlatt, a guest speaker at the 14th World Congress on Human Reproduction, said although the process was still experimental, doctors in about six European countries were already taking samples of testicular tissue from boys before cancer treatment. He did not believe

this was happening in Australia. "I think we're at the point where we should be freezing this tissue, like we freeze ovarian tissue, to maintain options for boys," he said. "If we don't freeze now, a six-year-old will probably ask in 15 or 20 years, why didn't you do that when everyone is doing that now? Give us 10 more years and we will have various options for using tissue to generate sperm."

■ A ceremony will be held tomorrow at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, South Wharf, from 10.30-11.30am to celebrate the life of IVF pioneer Carl Wood, who died this year. Friends, colleagues, patients, students and IVF children are invited.

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