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DEPARTMENT: NURSING SCIENCE

LEVEL: 200

COURSE: PHYSIOLOGY

 Question: discuss the factors facilitating the movement of sperm in the female reproductive tract.

 Passage of sperm through the female reproductive tract is regulated to maximize the chance of fertilization and ensure sperm with normal morphology and vigorous motility will be the ones to succeed.

 Oocytes are usually fertilized within hours of ovulation. On the other hand, in some species, sperm may be inseminated days(horses, cattle and pigs) or even months a (some bats species) before the arrival of the oocytes. In humans, there is evidence that fertilization occurs when intercourse takes place up to 5 days before ovulation. Because sperm are terminally differentiated cells, deprived of an active transcription and translation apparatus, they must survive in the female without benefit of reparative mechanisms available to many other cells. Sperm are subjected to physical stresses during ejaculation and contractions of the female tract, and they may sustain oxidative damage. Furthermore, because sperm are allogeneic to the female, they may encounter the defenses of the female immune system meant for infectious organisms. Thus, sperm must somehow use their limited resources to maintain their facilities in the face of numerous impediments. As it is, of the millions of sperms inseminated at coitus in humans, only a few thousand reach the Fallopian tubes and, ordinarily, only a single sperm fertilizes an oocyte.