



# TWO BROTHERS, ONE MISSION

Austin Fertility & Reproductive Medicine

By: JODY JOSEPH MARMEL

**DR. PARVIZ KAVOUSSI** and Dr. Shahryar Kavoussi are brothers and physicians both trying to help couples with fertility and work diligently to help their patients reach their goal of being able to have a child. For many women and men alike, there are many factors involved if unable to conceive and both doctors at the Austin Fertility & Reproductive Medicine practice each discuss their specialties below: Dr. Parviz Ka-

voussi focuses on male fertility and Dr. Shahryar Kavoussi specializes in female fertility.

Both physicians are native Austinites and are happy to be back home pursuing their medical careers. Dr. Shahryar Kavoussi earned a Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston and completed his residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University

of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. Subsequently, he completed a three year fellowship in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility at the University of Michigan. Board certified in all the aforementioned fields, Dr. S. Kavoussi explains why this field of medicine fulfills his dreams of being a physician.

"It is a true privilege to take care of couples who are experiencing subfertility or infertility. I chose Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility as my field due to the challenges involved and the satisfaction gained when trying to help couples achieve a successful pregnancy. There is a strong scientific background in this field and the cutting edge technologies are ever-changing, whether it be the clinical or embryology side of this area of medicine."

Dr. Parviz Kavoussi graduated from the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston for his Doctor of Medicine

degree and then did his residency training at Scott & White Memorial Hospital in Temple, Texas. He then spent two years training in General Surgery which was a requirement prior to four years of training in Urology. Dr. Kavoussi then moved to Charlottesville, Virginia, where he spent two years in fellowship subspecialty training in Reproductive Urology (male fertility).

He says, "I feel very fortunate to not only get to practice with partners I like, but partners that are family with one common goal, to help couples achieve their goals of building their families." When Dr. Parviz Kavoussi was at Scott & White waiting to start his training in Urology, his brother -Dr. Shahryar Kavoussi was doing his Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility fellowship training. "I took a little vacation time to go visit him and to catch the Michigan-Wisconsin football game there and had the opportunity to meet Dr. Dana

Ohl, one of the leaders in Reproductive Urology. After spending some time with him, I was very drawn to the specialty. Shahryar and I quickly realized that since we were both interested in reproductive medicine, we would have the very unique opportunity to work together to provide fertility care for couples with expertise in both the male and female sides to help us optimize couples care."

Both brothers joined their father, Dr. K.M. Kavoussi who has been providing fertility care for women in Austin since 1983. "Today we are proud to be the only private fertility center in the United States with fellowship trained and board certified specialists in both female and male infertility under one roof. We feel very fortunate to work together and to have this amazing practice where we can truly provide couples care offering complete evaluations for the subfertile couple and every possible treatment option that exist for a couple. We can give them all of their choices, not just ones that fit one side or the other."

Dr. Shahryar Kavoussi adds, "Our father has been a great inspiration to us in so many ways. He always taught us the importance of hard work and ethics. His mantra has always been 'the patient comes first.' As a result, both doctors follow this mantra with all of their patients today."

Both doctors discuss the reasons for female and male infertility. "There are many female factors which can lead to subfertility or infertility. Some include ovarian causes such as the age-related decline in fertility which generally becomes more pronounced at age 37 for most women. Infrequent or absent ovulation most commonly occurs due to polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) but can also occur in some women due to excessive stress, excessive exercise and/or eating disorders," states Dr. Shahryar Kavoussi. Blockage in the fallopian tubes can prevent the sperm and egg from meeting or can increase the risk of ectopic tubal pregnancy. The endometrial cavity of the uterus which is the desired location for implantation of an embryo may be affected by endometrial polyps, intra-uterine scar tissue or abnormal shape of the uterus since birth. Endometriosis and pelvic adhesions (also known as scar tissue) which are abnormal attachments between organs such as intestines, uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries may make it more difficult for a couple to conceive.

A man's fertility can be affected by a variety of factors including endocrine (hormonal), chromosomal (genetic) disorders affecting sperm production and/or quality, history of undescended testicles, varicoceles (abnormally dilated veins around the testicle), history of infection of the testicle, history of chemotherapy or radiation treatments, environmental exposures and toxins, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, certain medications, anatomic duct blockages, ejaculation disorders, erectile dysfunction, and unknown causes. "The complexity of this evaluation, identifying contributing causes, and treating the causes appropriately makes the evaluation and treatment by a Reproductive Urologist crucial. The goals of treating men with subfertility are identifying and treating reversible conditions, identifying irreversible causes in which assisted reproductive techniques using the male partner's sperm can be performed to achieve pregnancy, identifying irreversible conditions requiring the couple to use other treatments, identifying underlying medical problems



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associated with male infertility and identifying chromosomal disorders which may affect the man and his offspring," explains Dr. Parviz Kavoussi.

Procedures performed most frequently for female patients are egg retrievals and embryo transfers for IVF. Although there is some variation in success rate from year to year, depending on the women's age, her ovarian reserve testing and the couple's fertility factors, Dr. Shahryar Kavoussi says, "Our center's IVF pregnancy rate, per embryo transfer for women under age 35 has been in the 50 percent range over the last 2 years. We have an excellent embryology team at our IVF laboratory."

The most common procedures performed for men with subfertility include vasectomy reversal (micro-surgical or daVinci robot assisted), varicocele repair, sperm retrieval, and ejaculatory duct resection. Vasectomy reversal success rates are based on the level of training of the surgeon and the time since vasectomy. Dr. Parviz Kavoussi's success rates are 97% within 8 years from the time of vasectomy, 95% from 9 to 15 years and 75% after 15 years from vasectomy. In men with varicoceles who have deficiencies in their semen parameters -sperm counts, the ability of the sperm to swim and the number of sperm with normal shapes-70% will have improvement in sperm counts/function. "It has been shown that men who have their varicoceles repaired have less damage to the DNA of the sperm cells, likely making them better at fertilizing the egg."

Both of these remarkable physicians agree that the most rewarding part of their career is when their efforts to help a couple conceive are successful and that couple's dream of being parents comes true. "It is very rewarding to get the call that the couple has a positive pregnancy test. That being said, there is nothing better than when the couple brings their baby for us to see after delivery," states Dr. Parviz Kavoussi.

These brothers will continue to help couples in Austin and Texas who are struggling to conceive in the manner which fits the couple best. Long term goals include helping advance the science of reproductive medicine to help subfertile couples conceive on a larger scale. As an assistant professor at the University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Parviz Kavoussi says, "we are involved in basic science research and are active in clinical research as well to help advance the field for our patients."

Dr. Shahryar Kavoussi concludes, "When a couple achieves the successful pregnancy that has been sought, it makes the pinnacle of my day. This is the most satisfying part of my career and the reason we take care of fertility patients."

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