Since antiquities, correlation of infertility and impotence with environment have been investigated and several natural or chemical possible remedies have been suggested. Hippocrates (Fig. 1) made a precise and comprehensive description of eunuch men, noting that they were sterile, had few body hair, did not suffer from gout or baldness and had ladylike behaviors and attributed their impotence to the continuous horse riding. Aristoteles (384-322 BC) (Fig. 2) described peculiar aspects of intersex and hirsutism in women. Galen (Fig. 3) was the first to identify the double role of testis as font of energy and sexual organ in man.

Using the first rudimental microscopes, Antoni van Leeuwnoek (1632-1723) (Fig. 4) and his disciple L. Hamm discovered spermatozoa, while Marcello Malpighi (1628-1694) (Fig. 5) identified the corpus luteum in the ovary, whose name was coined by Niels Stensen (Fig. 6). Georges L.L. de Buffon (1707-1788) (Fig. 7) described the glandular structure of corpus luteum and the typical movements of spermatozoa. Lazzaro Spallanzani (1729-1799) (Fig. 8) understood that a contact between the masculine semen and the feminine egg was necessary for procreation, even if he ignored the role of spermatozoa in this process; using the spermatic liquid, he also made some attempts of artificial insemination.

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