

The rete testis in man: Ultrastructural aspects

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The ultrastructure of the normal human rete testis was analyzed. The rete testis cavities are irregularly shaped and contain virtually no spermatozoa. Smooth muscle cells often surround the cavities. In the epithelial lining, two cell types are distinguishable. Flat, dark cells exhibit numerous slender microvilli, and numerous apical and basal microvesicles. Prismatic, lighter cells have more cell organelles, mostly polarized towards a supranuclear position. Both cell types contain variable amounts of glycogen and fat, and an occasional cilium. All cells display intricate lateral cell surfaces that possess different cell-to-cell attachment devices. Intermediate cell types are frequently found. On a morphological basis, the epithelial cells seem to be involved in the release of substances into the lumen and probably also in transport towards the base. Connective tissue elements are found subjacent to the epithelium. Scattered among the fibrocytes are typical smooth muscle cells.

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