Introduction

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The sertoli cells are some of the largest cells of the body., 70 - 90 µm tall and about 30 µm wide, and extend from the basal lamina to the lumen of the semineferous tubules. Their lateral borders are difficult to see in the light microscope without special methods because of their close associations with the various spermatogenic cells (Christensen, 1965).

The sertoli cells form the major structural components of the semineferous tubule and they serve a number of functions, including: (a) mediating movement of spermatogenic cells from the basal lamina to the lumen, and release of the late spermatids into the tubule lumen; (b) compartmentalizing the epithelium into basal and adluminal compartements, thus forming part of the blood-testis barrier;(c) phagocytizing degenerating germ cells and residual bodies left after release of spermatozoa; (d) producing steroids from pregnenolone and progesterone; (e) secreting fluid, including androgen binding protein and inhibin in the adult and Mullerian inhibiting hormone in the fetus; (f) receptors-

mediated binding of testosterone and its metabolism to dehydrotestesterone; (g) serving as the conduit for passage of nutrients from the blood vascular system to the spermatocytes and spermatids (Fawcett, 1975).