

P-553 – DO CULTURAL BELIEFS PLAY A ROLE IN FERTILITY-RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE? A STUDY OF CHINESE WOMEN AFTER UNSUCCESSFUL FIRST IVF CYCLE

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STUDY QUESTION: What is the quality of life (QoL) of Chinese women after their unsuccessful first IVF cycle, and do cultural beliefs play a role?

SUMMARY ANSWER: Comparing FertiQoL scores with an existing Western sample of people with fertility issues, Chinese women in Hong Kong who had unsuccessful first IVF cycle reported better fertility-related QoL but similar treatment-related QoL. Traditional cultural beliefs about childbearing were associated with worse QoL scores.

WHAT IS KNOWN ALREADY: Past studies have found IVF and its negative outcome could be stressful and affect QoL among infertile women. Boivin and team (2011) developed a measure of fertility-related quality of life (FertiQoL) and obtained mean scores in a Western sample of people experiencing fertility problems. Little is known about the QoL of Chinese infertile women, especially those after unsuccessful treatment.

STUDY DESIGN, SIZE, DURATION: A cross-sectional survey consisting of FertiQoL, questions about Chinese cultural beliefs of childbearing, and demographic characteristics was conducted from February to November 2014 in a university-affiliated hospital. Participants were recruited through individual invitation at the assisted reproduction clinic.

PARTICIPANTS/MATERIALS, SETTING, METHODS: A total of 465 patients were approached after their first IVF cycle was found unsuccessful. Of them, 198 (response rate: 42.58%) have completed the self-administered questionnaires.

MAIN RESULTS AND THE ROLE OF CHANCE: The mean age of participants was 37.0 (SD =3.5), duration of marriage was 7.4 years (3.7), and duration of infertility was 4.1 years. The majority of them received tertiary education and had full-time job. Mean scores of Total FertiQoL, Core FertiQoL, and Treatment FertiQoL were 63.4 (12.5), 64.1 (14.5), and 61.9 (13.2). Both Total and Core scores were higher than that from a Western sample reported by Boivin et al (2011) ($t=8.10$ and 8.36 , $p<0.01$) while no difference was found in Treatment score ($t=1.41$, n.s.). Total and Core FertiQoL were found to be negatively associated with identification with Chinese cultural beliefs about childbearing ($r=-0.446$, $p<0.05$).

LIMITATIONS, REASON FOR CAUTION: Self-selection bias was inevitable in questionnaire survey, and the cross-sectional nature of the study did not permit causal inferences. Only infertile women who failed their IVF cycles were recruited, so the fertility quality of life for those in other stages of IVF is yet to be investigated.

WIDER IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS: This study sheds light on the quality of life of Chinese infertile women after unsuccessful IVF treatment. Identification with Chinese beliefs of childbearing, which emphasizes the patrilineal culture, was associated with worse QoL. The findings underline the importance of cultural sensitivity in addressing fertility-related issues in order to better facilitate psychosocial support at the clinic.