

Attitudes of infertile women towards gamete donation: a case study in Tehran

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Abstract

Introduction: On average, around 10-15 percent of couples in Iran are infertile. There have been major achievements in the area of modern technologies on infertility treatment and infertile couples have no obstacles or legal barriers to use these technologies in Iran. However, not all infertile couples are using modern technologies in Iran, and their decision making to use these technologies is influenced by their perceptions as well as societal expectations and attitudes. A deeper understanding of the perceptions and attitudes of infertile couples would shed light on socio-cultural aspects of their decision making in using these modern technologies. The main objective of the present paper was to study the attitudes of infertile women on gamete and embryo donation for infertility treatment in Tehran.

Materials & Methods: The data were collected from thirty women by using qualitative methods and in-depth interviews. Fifty percent of the respondents were selected from women visiting Avesina Infertility Clinic in Tehran and the rest were randomly selected from infertile women referring to five Health Centers of Shahid Beheshti Health Deputy in Tehran. The data for this study was collected during July and September 2005.

Results: The results of this study indicate that, there is a difference between the attitudes of respondents from Avesina Infertility Clinic (AIC) and their counterparts from Shahid Beheshti Health Centers. All respondents from AIC were familiar with gamete donation and believed that it was a medical step towards treatment of infertility, and their religious beliefs did not contradict their decision. However, the respondents from Shahid Beheshti Health Centers did not have any information regarding religious leaders' attitudes towards those methods, and the majority of them considered those methods as forbidden or illegal. In addition, the infertile women in the study were afraid of their treatment not kept confidential and that other people would not consider their child as their biological offspring.

Conclusion: Providing appropriate information related to new treatment methods, laws, and religious edicts not only will increase public awareness but also will change individuals' stereotypical views on infertility, thus promote infertile couples' decision making on the use of gamete and embryo donation for infertility treatment.

Key Words: Infertility, Gamete donation, Embryo donation, Health centers, Qualitative methods, In-depth interview.

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