

P-34. Gender differences in dealing with assisted reproduction treatment: psychological and social reaction in men and women

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Abstract

Objective

Increasing numbers of children are conceived through assisted reproduction techniques (ART). Using a comprehensive approach, the present research seeks to contribute to the understanding of gender differences in coping with infertility and in dealing with ART treatment.

Methods

Our sample consisted of 40 couples aged to 24 to 43 and the data were collected through semi-structured interviews.

Results

In the studied sample, gender differences existed not only in experiences of infertility but also in dealing with ART treatment. Responses to stress caused by infertility were stronger in women than men. For women the central aspect of infertility was the desire for a child while for men the central aspect was the social obligation imposed to fulfill the male role. To understand the complexity of infertility, the psychological and social dimension in how men and women cope with the treatment was the central aim of the present study. The women expressed more strongly emotion reaction to their infertility than the men. They received more social support than their partners, who experienced the fulfilment of the male role as well as the social role to become a parent.

Conclusion

These findings emphasize the importance of psychological support during ART treatment oriented to the gender difference, recognizing, naming and intervening to work on these differences.