

Knowledge, Attitude and Perceptions of Men toward Infertility: A Case Study of Gwadangaji Village in Birnin Kebbi

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Abstract

Knowledge about infertility is inadequate in many parts of the world. A global survey of almost 17,500 men from 10 countries revealed that knowledge regarding fertility and biology of reproduction is poor. Thus, a number of misconceptions regarding infertility are surrounded by many mistaken beliefs about its causes such as witchcraft, possession by evil spirits and these beliefs negatively affect its management. This research was carried out in Gwadangaji area of Birnin-Kebbi, Kebbi State Nigeria. Questionnaires were designed to represent the sample population of the community and only the educated were involved in the study. The results of this work, in an attempt to assess the level of knowledge, attitude and perception of men toward infertility in Gwadangaji village of Birnin Kebbi a tabulated decision mean is taken to be ≥ 2.5 therefore, any mean value calculated from the data that is < 2.5 is considered not to agree and a grand mean that is > 2.5 is considered to agree that the respondents in this research do not have adequate knowledge on infertility disorders. On the average from the overall results of the work, the grand means of the respondents is greater than decision mean value (2.5), this implies that men in Gwadangaji area have adequate knowledge towards infertility. Majority of the respondents show that infertility has a serious impact on couple's personal relation and on their physical and mental health; it is considered a social stigma with associated emotional and marital instability sometimes ending in divorce or suicide. The study also found out that culture and religion strongly influence the understanding of infertility among the inhabitants of the area. Also, that those women are sometimes verbally or physically abused in their families, sent back to their parents or looked down upon by the society if they are unable to conceive.

Keywords: *Couples Divorce; Infertility; Knowledge; Men; Respondents; Women*

Introduction

Infertility is the inability of a woman to conceive, of a man to bring about conception (Waller, 2009). Oxford advance learners' dictionary defines infertility as when people, animals and plants are not able to have babies or produce young ones. Medically, infertility is defined as the failure to conceive after years of unprotected sexual intercourse. Primary infertility is the inability to conceive after one year of unprotected sexual intercourse with no previous conception. Secondary infertility occurs when couples who have previously conceived children are now unable to conceive [1]. Infertility is a disease of the reproductive system defined by the failure to achieve a clinical pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse (WHO, 2009).

World health organization, (WHO) sees infertility as a public health problem that affects 8 - 12% of couples and this involves about 50 - 80 million people worldwide and 2 million new infertility couples per year worldwide. Traditionally, child bearing is one of the important marks of manhood/womanhood in African setting; it is regarded as an ultimate blessing in marriage [2].

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In Nigeria according to WHO the prevalence of infertility is said to vary from 20 - 30% which makes it a public health concern. In Kebbi state the problem of infertility is further affected by increasing cultural and religious beliefs; where infertility is believed to be caused by witchcraft, unfriendly neighbors or as a punishment from God.

Aim of the Study

The aim of this work is to assess the knowledge, attitude and perception of men towards infertility as well as to ascertain the influence of religion and culture towards infertility in Gwadangaji area of Kebbi State, Nigeria and to enlighten the community on the actual causes of infertility among couples and its socio-cultural implication in marriage.

Methodology

A standard convenient sampling technique/method using the available object in the study area was adopted, ensuring that those sample questionnaires were accurately a representation of the larger population and only the educated were involved in the study. The research was carried out in Gwadangaji area of Birnin-Kebbi, Kebbi State Nigeria it is ruled by Alhaji Umar Ahmad. The village has a population of over 900 male and 11000 female analyzed by the recent census 2011. The people in this area are predominantly Hausa and Fulani by tribes; they are mostly business men and farmers with few civil servants. The area has good road, network, drainage system, good water and electricity supply.

An introduction letter was obtained from the school authority which introduced the researcher to the area of study before administering questionnaires and respondents were assured of treating all answers given with strict confidentiality. They were also assured that all responses given are for academic purpose only.

The structured questionnaires were distributed to the respondents with clear explanations of the purpose and the objectives of the study and difficult areas were also explained to the respondent. 100% of the questionnaires were retrieved back and were analyzed using frequency distribution table and Likert scale using (4) four point rating scale by the use of mean statistical method vis-à-vis:

$$X = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

Where X = mean

\sum = Summation

F = Frequency of responses

X = Rating of responses

N = Total number of respondents

Note that: The value 4 is rated as strongly agreed (SA), 3 for agreed (A), 2 for disagreed (DA) and 1 for strongly disagreed (SD).

Results

The results in table 1 shows that most of the respondent are within the age range of 21 - 30 years with the frequency of 19 (24%) followed by 31 - 40 years with frequency of 10 (20%) and the least of frequency of the respondent 9 (18%) of 41 - 50 years old.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
21 - 30	19	38%
31 - 40	10	20%
41 - 50	9	18%
51 and above	12	24%
Total	50	100%

TABLE 1: Showing the age-range of respondent.

The results in table 2 reveals that most of the respondents are Muslims for Islam had a frequency of 40 with percentage of (80%) while Christianity had frequency of 10 with percentage of (20%).

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Islam	40	80%
Christianity	10	20%
Total	50	100%

Table 2: Showing religions of the respondents.

The results in table 3 shows that majority of the respondent are married as they have the highest frequency of 31 (62%) while the singles have the frequency of 19 (38%) with nil divorce.

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	19	38%
Married	31	62%
Total	50	100%

Table 3: Marital status of the respondent.

The decision mean is taken to be ≥ 2.5 and the grand mean calculated from table 4 is 2.4 this therefore, implies that the respondents of this research do not have adequate knowledge on infertility because the calculated value is less than the decision mean (2.5).

S/N	Item	SA	A	DA	SD	Mean	Remark
	Knowledge about infertility is inadequate in many parts of the world	13	17	18	2	2.82	Agreed
	Evil forces are often thought to be the cause of infertility	5	15	20	10	2.3	Disagreed
	Men are less likely to seek service for infertility than women	15	24	7	4	2.94	Agreed
	Women know more about fertility than men because they tend to be first to consult her physician about fertility problem	7	4	15	24	1.88	Disagreed
	Fertility problem are shared by both male and female sexes.	6	7	24	13	2.12	Disagreed

Table 4: The level of knowledge in men towards infertility.

$$\text{Grand mean} = 12.06/5 = 2.412 \approx 2.4.$$

Table 5 shows that the calculated respondent mean value; (2.6) which is greater than decision mean value (2.5), this indicates that men in Gwadangwaji area have adequate knowledge towards infertility.

S/N	Item	SA	A	DA	SD	Mean	Remarks
1.	People don't recognize infertility as a disorder that is why they do not seek for medical care to the correct causes of infertility	16	22	7	4	2.96	Agreed
2.	Infertility is associated with women only	2	5	17	26	1.82	Disagreed
3.	Infertility has a serious impact on couples personal relationship and on their physical and mental health	12	32	5	1	3.1	Agreed
4.	Infertility is considered social stigma which is associated with emotional and marital instability and sometimes ending in divorce or suicide.	4	26	15	5	2.58	Agreed

Table 5: The perception of men towards infertility.
Grand mean ==2.622.6.

From the results in table 6 the respondents mean value being (2.8) is greater than the decision mean value (2.5) which indicates that religion and culture have influence in infertility cases among people living in Gwadangwaji area of Kebbi State.

S/N	Item	SA	A	DA	SD	Mean	Remarks
1	Infertility is one of the most devastating life crises that couples can face	16	28	4	2	3.16	Agreed
2	Culture and religion strongly influence one's understanding of infertility	3	34	8	4	2.76	Agreed
3	Infertility women are excluded from certain social activities and traditional ceremonies	5	13	9	23	2.0	Dis-agreed
4	A couple of months after marriage if there is no evidence that the wife has conceived a lot of anxiety is generated.	27	16	5	2	3.36	Agreed

Table 6: The influence of religion and culture toward infertility.
Grand mean ==2.7782.8.

Discussion

From the results of this work, table 1 shows that majority of the respondents fall under the range of 21 - 30 years, table 2 of our results also recorded that out of the 100 respondents 80% of them are Muslims only 20% are Christian. Table 4 also records that 62% of the respondents are married only 38% are single; which are requirements for filling the questionnaires because all these variables have effect on infertility. It is reported that 80% of respondents agreed that knowledge about infertility is inadequate in many parts of the world, thus the study is in agreement with that of a global survey data of almost 17,500 men from 10 countries admitted that knowledge regarding fertility and biology of reproduction is poor [3]. Additionally, there are a number of misconceptions thought to be the cause of infertility [4]. These misconceptions eventually lead to practices ranging from the absurd post social exercise of standing on one's head, to the unpleasant and dangerous traditional remedies of eating feces and inducing vomiting as a cure [3]. The result of this work is also in agreement with the study conducted by Chandra which shows that men are less involved to seek attention for infertility than women by the way, many men from infertile couples do not undergo a male evaluation despite recommendations from the American Society of

Reproductive Health in 2013 which advocates for evaluation of both partners [1]. Much of the available information on attitude and treatment seeking behavior pertaining to infertility is based on data collected from women. Data about men's belief and awareness of infertility and its treatment are scanty and unstudied [1,5].

A research group has found out that 67% of women that are unable to give live birth or give birth to male children have marital conflicts; 20% of the women had either been threatened with divorce, 38% of their husbands remarrying and 26% were been forced to return to their parents' homes due to physical or verbal abuse by their husbands and in laws leading to severe mental stress [6]. Majority of the respondents show that infertility has a serious impact on couple's personal relation and on their physical and mental health [7]. Infertility is considered social stigma with associated emotional and marital instability sometimes ending in divorce or suicide [6,8]. Also, according to a study conducted by Gerrit [9] social stigma is attached to infertility which cause women to blame themselves for infertility. In the same vein, in Mozambique, infertile women are usually excluded from certain social activities and traditional ceremonies [9]. Also according to another study conducted by Vanbelen [10], women are verbally or physically abused, sent back to their parents, looked down upon by society or even have their marriage dissolved or terminated if they are unable to conceive [11-13].

Conclusion

It can be concluded from the findings in our work; the religious perspective show that 90% of the respondents agree that infertility is one of the most devastating life crises that couples can face, and that culture and religion strongly influence one's understanding and experience of infertility in Gwadangaji area of Kebbi State. Hence there is need for awareness and enlightenment campaigns in such areas in order to alleviate these traumas on women with infertility cases or tendencies.

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