Reviewer’s report

Title: Knowledge, perceptions and myths regarding infertility among adults visiting tertiary care hospitals in Pakistan

Version: 2 Date: 10 July 2011

Reviewer: Mary McNaughton-Cassill

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- Major Compulsory Revisions

1) Introduction:

The introduction for this study has been revised significantly, making it clearer and easier for the reader to follow.

2) Methods:

a) This section is still somewhat awkward, and difficult to follow. It might be better to call infertility a condition or a disorder rather than a disease. It may just be a function of my computer but a number of the words are running together.

b) This section still needs to developed. How were people approached? Where were they interviewed. How was the power calculation made?

c) The term test tube baby will still raise flags in Western readers. Is the English term actually used even with Urdu speakers?

The wording could also be revised. For example:

d) The questionnaire was divided into various subsections, the first assessed knowledge of infertility and the next evaluated people’s attitude toward infertility. The final section inquired about their perceptions of how infertility affects marital outcomes and explored prevailing myths about infertility in the context of Pakistani culture and society.

3) Results:

a) Since most of the questions were presented in a yes/no rather than a continuous format, their statistical analysis is limited. However, it would still be useful to compare things like knowledge and attitudes about infertility, on the basis of gender, and education level, especially since such factors are discussed in the introduction.

b) In the results section it would be preferable to refer to education level as opposed to simply “education.”

c) The discussion of whether infertility should be labeled a disease should at least be introduced in the introduction.
4) Discussion:

a) The discussion still needs significant revision. There are still a number of awkward phrases and sentences in this section. The first sentence states that knowledge about infertility was “inadequate” but it is not clear how this is defined. The word limited might be better. In later paragraphs it would read better to say “being blamed” for infertility rather than “to be” blamed, or to talk about “common” causes of infertility, not “big” causes, and to use the word “disturbing” rather than “disappointing” in regard to results.

b) The content of the discussion needs to be reorganized so that it addresses the points raised in the introduction in a clearer, less disjointed manner. Some of the most interesting issues raised in this study include people’s focus on alternative treatments for infertility, and the role religion in influencing people’s attitudes towards infertility, which are still given only cursory mention. In addition, although television may be the most accessible media available to spread information, the discussion does not address who might craft messages to be broadcast, how they would be paid for or who they might target. While these are not issues addressed by the studies survey they could be raised in terms of the need for future studies. Likewise, if religious leaders might contribute to the discussion it might be useful to propose assessing their understanding and beliefs about infertility as well.

c) In addition, the limitations section is not well developed. Although a convenience sample and interviewer bias are real problems, they occur in many studies, and the use of a structured interview helps to minimize their influence. It would have been nice if more was ascertained about the respondents own IVF history, and the content of their alternative beliefs which could be proposed for future studies.

d) The section on recommendations makes a number of statements about the belief systems of less educated individuals that should be substantiated by evidence from the literature, and the section on making “correct Islamic views” available to the public is too vague. What are those views and how consistent are they with IVF technology and practices.

5) Conclusions:

In short, although the authors have made significant revisions to this paper, it is still not ready for publication. To some degree this may be due to language issues, so perhaps they might seek assistance with English editing. However, there are also a number of concerns they need to address in terms of the analysis, presentation, and discussion of the data.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited
**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'