Reviewer's report

Title: The decision-making process for the fate of frozen embryos by Japanese infertile women: a qualitative study

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Reviewer: Ann Kerr

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting article with original data and new insights into decision making about embryos in storage. However, there are too many conceptual threads which are not sufficiently elaborated or tied together - the article tries to do too much and therefore lacks some more substantial discussion about complex concepts. The decision model emerges from analysis of retrospective accounts of how people contemplated and reached a decision and it reads as though the linear framework is imposed by the authors rather than inherent in what interviewees said. Even if it was inherent in their accounts it would be a post-hoc rationalisation. The conclusions for practice are also rather obvious and could have been generated by academics in this field without all of this detailed empirical work and analysis.

I think the paper would be much improved if broken into a series of papers which spent time analysing important features of respondents' accounts which could then go towards a more universal analysis of decision processes and recommendations for practice.

The main issue of interest here is the concept of Mottainai embryos. This is highly original and intriguing but needs much more unpacking. A new article should start by describing the concept and how it emerged in accounts and then considering the different forms it took in relation to particular aspects of decision making. There is also much to be gained here with respect to other work on ambivalence in decision making and the authors could make a valuable theoretical as well as empirical contribution to the literature.

On this basis my recommendation would be reject