Reviewer's report

Title: Are women and men well informed about fertility? Childbearing intentions, fertility knowledge and information-gathering sources in Portugal

Version: 0 Date: 18 Mar 2017

Reviewer: Xiao-Ming Zhu

Reviewer's report:

This article focused on 'Are women and men well informed about fertility?' based on a random-route domiciliary investigation in a representative national sample. A sample of 2404 individuals was enrolled, ranged in age from 18 to 45, to complete a structured questionnaire regarding fertility, childbearing intentions and socio-demographic characteristics.

It was found that most of the individuals desired to have children in the future and that two children were the desire for them to have. There was a discrepancy between the numbers of planned and desired children which was higher in men, in participants with lower education levels, in professionally active participants and in the unemployed participants. Relationship stability seemed more important in influencing childbearing decisions than financial stability or family support. Participants' knowledge on fertility was poor. There was a discrepancy as well on the level of fertility knowledge, in which women, the participants who were older than 25, the participants with longer education and the participants with higher income shown a higher levels. Also, there existed an overestimation in participants on both the chances of spontaneous pregnancy and the success rates of assisted reproduction techniques. Websites were the main information sources on the knowledge of fertility used by the participants and only 18.0% of the participants had the related information from their doctors.

It was concluded that, although Portuguese reported the desire to have children in the future, their knowledge regarding fertility and infertility risk was poor. There is a real need to work with general practitioners to empower them to provide adequate fertility information to every childless couple.

The article overcomes lots of limitations of previous relative online studies or mainly university student investigations in method and scale. It provides a large-scale study assessing fertility
knowledge in a representative national sample. The findings provided indicate the lack of important fertility knowledge in couples with childhood desires, particularly in those at a state of parenthood postponement. These findings are really informative, comprehensive and practical for the related public health care services to take measures to improve their relative service frameworks in the accessibility and user acceptability to fertility.

The quality of written English is acceptable. My recommendation for this manuscript is to accept it with 6 'Minor Essential Revisions' as follows to make the article clearly described:

Minor Essential Revision-1 on the description of 'Figure-4' at Page-12 in line 298, 299 and 301: please consider the revision of "Figure-4" into the real "Figure-5".

Minor Essential Revision-2 on Figure-1 of Page-21: Please consider the revision of Figure-1 (Discrepancy between the number of desired and number of planned children) into 4 desire-plan paired subgroups, like no children, 1 child, 2 children and 3 or more children with 2 legends of desired & planned. Please add the name of data analysis method and the relative P value of significance level for each subgroup as well.

Minor Essential Revision-3 on Figure-2 of Page-22: Please consider the revision of Figure-2 (Motivations for parenthood for men and women) with 2 legends of men & women and the explanation of coordinate axis value, plus the name of data analysis method and the relative P value of significance level for each subgroup.

Minor Essential Revision-4 on Figure-3 of Page-23: Please consider the revision of Figure-3 (Factors valued by the participants regarding childbearing decision among men and women) with the explanation of coordinate axis value plus the name of data analysis method.
Minor Essential Revision-5 on Figure-4 of Page-24: Please consider the revision of Figure-4 (Number of correct answers per subgroup according to age, education, professional status and monthly income) with adding the name of data analysis method and the relative P value of significance level for each subgroup.

Minor Essential Revision-6 on Figure-5 of Page-25: Please consider the revision of Figure-5 (Information sources typically used by the participants and their perceived usefulness regarding fertility/reproductive health) by listing the dark columns according to the descending percentage of participants who perceived usefulness for gathering information, and changing the light grey columns with brackets plus the inner percentage of participants who actually used to gather information.

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