Reviewer’s report

Title: Health state utilities for infertility and subfertility

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Reviewer: Kathryn Flynn

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript examines the topic of health state utilities for infertility and subfertility. This is an important topic for cost-effectiveness analyses to compare different fertility treatments and other ways of addressing infertility. It will be of interest to readers of Reproductive Health.

In an online survey of an online sample of 767 Dutch adults, the authors used accepted methods to understand people's evaluations of different health states, include the time trade-off method. Respondents were also asked about the level of health plan reimbursement that should be covered by Dutch national insurance.

In general the paper is well-written. The authors make a compelling case for the gap that their research fills. The methods seem appropriate and are explained quite nicely. The results are easy to follow. The discussion is balanced. I have a few comments/suggestions.

The authors should reconsider repeated use of the value-laden word "suffer" when referring to the experience of infertility.

Under respondents, the authors state that the sample was representative of the adult Dutch population in terms of age and sex. This seems somewhat limited, what other characteristics can they compare, especially regarding characteristics that may be related to the topic and cognitive task at hand (e.g., education, # of children, general health)? If the sample is not representative of the adult Dutch population on these characteristics, this should be stated.

Under questionnaire, the authors state that "the questionnaire was validated by a gynecologist specialized in subfertility." It is unclear what is meant by this statement. If the authors mean that a gynecologist specialized in subfertility reviewed the questionnaire and provided comments based on their particular medical knowledge, this is certainly worthwhile to note, but cannot be considered "validation" of the questionnaire. There are many types of validity; review by a single content expert may offer some evidence of face validity of the questionnaire. Was the questionnaire evaluated by any patients before fielding it? Was there any pilot test? If not, this should be stated as a limitation.

An additional reference that seems relevant to include: "Economic aspects of infertility care: a challenge for researchers and clinicians" by the ESHRE Capri Workshop Group et al.
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