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Title:

How Can We Make a Good Experience Even Better: Ways to Enhance the Fertility Journey

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Objective:

To assess the infertility patient experience in the U.S.

Design:

Survey

Materials and Methods:

A 52-item survey, relating to demographics and treatment experience, of those undergoing fertility treatment. Each of 6 domains included a series of structured questions, pooled for analysis, and also allowed for open-ended feedback. Kruskal Wallis, Pearson's chi-squared and Spearman's correlation were used.

Results:

Four hundred and ninety-nine females of reproductive age (91.8% aged 25-40) responded. Seventy-eight percent had been trying to conceive for over a year prior to consultation, with 52.3% trying for 1-2 years. The majority (56.8%) had been receiving care for 1-3 years, and 50.4% were going forth or had completed at least one in vitro fertilization (IVF) cycle. Length of time prior to treatment had a weak negative correlation with pregnancy ($r=-0.1$, $p=0.04$), and time in treatment had a positive correlation ($r=0.19$, $p<0.0001$), but neither were significant. The majority (84.7-90.9%) were satisfied with scheduling, phone calls, monitoring and confidentiality, though only 37.3% agreed that the office provided information for infertility support services. Though the majority (56.1-68.0%) agreed the finance team was courteous, only 33.4% agreed that they were informed of options to reduce their financial burden. A majority



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(75.2-85.7%) were also satisfied with their nursing care, though only 29.4% agreed that their nurse mentioned resources for emotional support. In terms of physician interaction, 64.9-75.9% agreed that their physicians spent enough time with them, offered appropriate explanations and treatment alternatives, and were sensitive. The majority (74.8-87.1%) were satisfied with their care. Finally, the majority (71.7%) used some form of complementary treatment, most frequently acupuncture (45.0%). These options were most frequently found online (27.1%), through advocacy groups (26.7%), or through a physician referral (22.9%). No significant associations were noted between demographics, pregnancy outcome or treatment satisfaction.

Conclusions:

Though infertility patients are generally satisfied with their care and have overall positive perceptions regarding each team within their practice, a majority also utilize complementary services and express a need for greater awareness of external support. This survey identifies room for improvement in the delivery of reproductive care, namely helping patients identify financial, emotional and complementary medical resources. Along with providing top-quality medical care, which many participants felt they did receive, this enhancement of patient experience can help minimize the psychological trauma to those undergoing fertility treatments.

Support:

None.