

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Fertility-awareness knowledge, attitudes, and practices of women seeking fertility assistance

Kerry D. Hampton, Danielle Mazza & Jennifer M. Newton

Accepted for publication 9 June 2012

Correspondence to K.D. Hampton:
e-mail: kerry.hampton@monash.edu

Kerry D. Hampton MA RN RM
Doctoral Candidate
Department of General Practice, School of
Primary Health Care, Faculty of Medicine,
Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash
University, Notting Hill, Victoria Australia

Danielle Mazza MBBS MD FRACGP
Professor, Head of Department
Department of General Practice, School of
Primary Health Care, Faculty of Medicine,
Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash
University, Notting Hill, Victoria Australia

Jennifer M. Newton RN EdD Grad Cert Sci
Senior Research Fellow
School of Nursing and Midwifery, Monash
University, Clayton Campus, Victoria
Australia

HAMPTON K.D., MAZZA D. & NEWTON J.M. (2012) Fertility-awareness knowledge, attitudes and practices of women seeking fertility assistance. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 00(0), 000–000. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2648.2012.06095.x.

Abstract

Aims. To report a descriptive study of fertility-awareness knowledge, attitudes, and practice of infertile women seeking fertility assistance.

Background. Previous research has suggested that poor fertility-awareness may be a contributing cause of infertility among women seeking fertility assistance at assisted reproductive technology clinics. The actual practices and attitudes towards fertility-awareness in this particular group of women are unknown.

Design. A cross-sectional questionnaire-based survey.

Methods. The study was conducted over 6 months, from 2007–2008, of women on admission to two assisted reproductive technology clinics in a major city in Australia.

Results. Two hundred and four of 282 distributed questionnaires were completed (response rate = 72.3%). Eighty-three per cent had attempted conception for 1 year or more, 86.8% actively tried to improve their fertility-awareness from one or more sources of the information, 68.2% believed they had timed intercourse mainly within the fertile window of the menstrual cycle in their attempts at conception, but only 12.7% could accurately identify this window. Ninety-four per cent believe that a woman should receive fertility-awareness education when she first reports trouble conceiving to her doctor.

Conclusions. Most women seeking assistance at assisted reproductive technology clinics attempt timed intercourse within the fertile window of the menstrual cycle. However, few accurately identify this window, suggesting that poor fertility-awareness may be a contributing cause of infertility.

Keywords: fertility-awareness, infertility, midwifery, natural family planning, nursing, primary health care, sub-fertility