Fertility Knowledge and Awareness among Reproductive Age Women

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Background

While decreased fertility in women is associated with many factors including: hormonal abnormalities, physical barriers in the reproductive tract, tobacco use and being over or under weight, infertility increases dramatically with age. Many American women are delaying childbearing. Research has shown that many women with infertility related to age suffer a significant amount of guilt regarding their decision to delay childbearing. For the health of our patients, it is important that we learn what they know about the course of human fertility and develop improved methods to educate women regarding their fertility choices.

Objective

To describe women’s knowledge of fertility.

Methods

Survey
Socio-demographics, pregnancy & infertility Hx
16 fertility knowledge items
- modified from published documents
Paper/pencil in exam rooms

Knowledge Scores
Answers were scored for accuracy & summed.
Median splits (high vs. low score) were used in comparisons by socio-demographic variables

Fertility Curve
Mode responses of age categories for peak fertility, gradual and rapid decline were graphed against the standard fertility curve.

Statistics
Chi square analysis p<.05

Results

Response Rate
N=206/330 (62.4% response rate)

Participants
Ages: Median=25 (16-51) years
Pregnant: 64%   Parents: 67%
Education > High school: 59%

Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible</th>
<th>Raw Scores</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Possible</td>
<td>0 - 16</td>
<td>0 – 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>1 – 13</td>
<td>6 - 81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M SD</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>41%</td>
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Conclusions

Overall knowledge is poor. Women think fertility peaks and subsequently declines later in life than it actually does. Providers should have conversations about fertility with all women, especially those with less formal education.
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