

## CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

### **Sociodemographic factors as determinants of quality of life and quality of social interactions among heterosexual couples undergoing assisted reproduction techniques (ART)**

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#### ***Introduction***

When facing with stressful physical and psychosocial events, sociodemographic factors can be an important factor for quality of life and quality of social interactions [1]. The experience of infertile couples undergoing ART is a complex and stressful process that may have a negative effect on quality of life [2]. There is a need to better understand how certain sociodemographic factors impact on the quality of life and in the quality of social interactions of patients undergoing ART, in order to be able to anticipate the consequences from an integrated care perspective.

#### ***Methods***

This study aims to assess the relationship between sociodemographic factors (sex, marital status and employment status) and the quality of life and the quality of social interactions between heterosexual couples attending for the first time the ART Unit at the Hospital Universitari Politècnic La Fe in Valencia (Spain). A total of 256 couples were evaluated using FertiQoL questionnaire that measures quality of life and quality of social interactions, among other aspects. Sociodemographic factors were assessed by an ad-hoc survey.

#### ***Results***

Significant differences were found between women and men in the quality of social interactions; women scored lower in social interactions ( $p=.036$ ) and in quality of life ( $p=.001$ ). Significant differences according to marital status were also observed for both quality of life ( $p=.041$ ) and quality of social interactions ( $p=.000$ ); showing that married couples had lower quality of life and lower quality of social interactions than unmarried couples. As per the employment status, significant differences were found on quality of life ( $p=.033$ ), and the lowest levels of quality of life were found among stay-at-home women. Furthermore, a significant positive relation was found between quality of social interactions and quality of life ( $r=.827$ ,  $p<.001$ ), as expected.

### ***Discussions & Conclusions***

Our findings highlight sex differences among infertile couples with regard to both quality of life and quality of social interactions. Besides, sociodemographic factors could affect the quality of life of patients undergoing ART.

### ***Lessons learned***

Integrated care for couples experiencing infertility and undergoing ART must include the provision of psychosocial support. This support should take into consideration the quality of life and the quality of social interactions of these patients. Particular support should be given to stay-at-home married women, who reported the lowest levels of quality of life.

### ***Limitations & suggestions for future research***

This study has been limited to heterosexual couples; therefore, future research should consider sexual diversity, as well as other sociodemographic factors that may affect the quality of life and the quality of social interactions of infertile patients, such as culture, religion, societal norms and the perception of social support.

### ***References***

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2. Molgora S, Fenaroli V, Acquati C, De Donno A, Baldini MP, Saita E. Examining the Role of Dyadic Coping on the Marital Adjustment of Couples Undergoing Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART). 2019;10:415.