THE NEED FOR A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO INFERTILITY

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MINIMAL ON ALTERNATE THERAPIES

➢ Science seems moving, but lack of research in alternate therapies
➢ Literature review of various talks
➢ Including keynote address
➢ Patient session - communication during infertility journey
➢ Posters

CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE ABOVE
IN MY OPINION

SOUTH AFRICA

IS AMONGST THE

LEADERS IN THIS FIELD
Pre- and early pregnancy diet is associated with fertility and health in pregnancy (Claire Roberts)

➢ Importance of a multidisciplinary approach
➢ Diet prior to pregnancy, during pregnancy and after pregnancy
➢ More fast food, more time to pregnancy
DOES AN APPLE A DAY KEEP THE DOCTOR AWAY?

But am I willing to comply?

Optimizing the lifestyle of women and men: a hands-on approach (Organized by the Special Interest Group Nursing and Midwifery)

➢ Underweight & obese statuses increased risk of low birth weight and preterm delivery

➢ Couples follow regime for longer if (they think) it increases chances of conceiving

➢ Transgenerational impact
ART units should be encouraged to develop non-medical support for couples (Courbiere, et al)

Evaluation of depression and anxiety levels in IVF / ICSI cycles of patients with endometriosis; a prospective study (Ceran MU)

The importance of looking beyond emotional factors (Dennehy)
INTIMACY ISSUES

Counselors to be trained in relationship and sexual concerns
HELP WITH INCREASED AWARENESS

Skills to reduce stress;
Manage lifestyle factors
SLEEP DIFFICULTIES

Emerged as significant

“I have a theory about your insomnia...”
STRESS AND INFERTILITY

Nothing new

Stress and the impact on Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) outcomes (Geisler M.)

Psychological stress at the time of transvaginal ultrasound guided oocyte retrieval does not adversely affect in-vitro fertilization outcomes: a prospective study (Cheung et al)

Stress and depression at aspiration (Ceran Mu et al)

But wait!
ACUTE STRESS

HAD NO IMPACT

- Although aspiration painful & stressful, modest increase in stress does not appear to affect the IVF outcomes.

- Acute stress did not impact negatively on #eggs, maturity, #viable embryos, pregnancy outcome.

- But evidence job-related stress = higher pregnancy loss.
WHAT ARE WE MISSING?

The role of chronic stress

➢ Conversely, those who achieve livebirth; less likely to report high perceived stress

➢ Suggests we missing something

➢ Work stress + perceived higher stress = chronic stress
THE ROLE OF DIGITAL MEDIA

and cycle apps

Cycle apps – help or confusion (Bench-Kapon et al)

Mediemo app- is tracking the emotional signature of patients undergoing ivf treatment useful? (Cheong et al)

Does watching an educational video increase fertility awareness? Results from a randomized controlled trial with partnered people desiring to become parents (Pedro et al)
➢ Understanding limits and accuracy

➢ Mobile technology empowers sharing of mood

➢ Support through a potentially harmful journey

➢ Video intervention increased FA levels 1 month later, effects maintained 1-year later
LOW COST RETRIEVAL OF DATA

Cost effective
EASY ACCESS TO TOOL TO RAISE FA IN SHORT & LONG TERM

Include videos, text messages, online tools, personalized appointments
IT IS EVIDENT THAT

patients are asking more questions

Identification of research priorities in infertility and assisted reproduction: a multicenter study in partnership with patients (García D)

Identified 10 questions
1. SIDE-EFFECTS of ART
2. Effective METHODS TO COPE
3. Effects of DIET
4. ART SUCCESS RATES per clinical profile
5. LIFESTYLE factors to prevent infertility
6. LONG-TERM RISKS of ART
7. ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES such as acupuncture, yoga etc
8. Impact of EXERCISE
9. OOCYTES’ QUANTITY & QUALITY affect fertility
10. GENETIC PATTERNS or hereditary conditions causing infertility

PATIENT’S VOICES SHOULD NOT BE IGNORED
AND WHAT DOES THE PATIENT SAY?

*Dear doctor: can you hear me?* (Jessica Hepburn)

- How are you going to treat my head and my body?
- It’s not over when you get the double line
- We need help to redefine our lives
- You need to understand that you’re leaving, at the very least, a scar, and sometimes an open wound
Emotional support from the beginning

➢ Causes as much stress as a life threatening illness
➢ Peak 2-3 years after trying
➢ Discover personal limits
➢ Realistic goals
➢ Closing discussion important
AND THE MEN?

Include them in decisions

Deal with endometriosis and infertility: partners matter as interrelations influence stress and sexual satisfaction (Schick et al)

Out of sync: A qualitative examination of male and female partners’ role in decision-making in in vitro fertilization (IVF) (Y.K.G)
➢ Partnership quality positively influences course of various diseases

➢ Positive relationship exists in treatment if partners can buffer high levels of stress associated with treatment

➢ Men should not be excluded

➢ Improving sexual satisfaction

➢ Male partners are not involved in decision-making as much as their partners like them to
CONCLUSIONS

- Lifestyle factors important
- If patient understands lifestyle factors then willing to comply
- Alternate therapies
- Chronic stress not just acute
- Cycle apps and videos
- Depression and anxiety - individual group couple
PATIENTS ARE BECOMING MORE EMPOWERED AND MORE VOCAL

South Africa is not far behind

➢ Stress management courses www.tups.co

➢ Information & support like IFAASA and House of Fertility

➢ APPS like Fertilygo

➢ Leading in terms of diet and insulin resistance

➢ Fertility Show Africa 6-7 March 2020