

Sociocultural Influences on Fertility in the Middle East

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Abstract

Infertility is acknowledged as a global health problem with a prevalence which is estimated to be one in every seven couples in the Western world and one in every four couples in developing countries. Geographical, sociocultural/religious and ethnical dissimilarities contribute to these global variations in infertility prevalence. This study critically appraises the existing evidence regarding the association between female fertility and relevant sociocultural factors in Middle East countries focusing on aspects such as obesity, vitamin D deficiency and parental consanguinity which has been shown to be associated with female infertility and prematurely reduced ovarian reserve. In addition to the current standard evaluation of infertile couples, region-specific counselling is required and treatment modalities such as Pre-implantation Genetic Screening (PGS) and Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD) may be of benefit. This study reviews the advances in PGS and PGD and the role played by these treatments in the management of the infertile couple. Considering the facts presented in this presentation, it is important to develop educational public health strategies for couples with the aim to increase public awareness about the impact of consanguinity, obesity and vitamin D deficiency. Future diagnosis, counseling and treatment of infertility should take region-specific risk factors into account.

Biograph :

Carol Coughlan is highly experienced Consultant Obstetrician Gynecologist specializing in Reproductive Medicine & Surgery at IVI Middle East Fertility Clinic, Dubai. She carries with her years of experience and associations with numerous hospitals and institutions worldwide. She has graduated with honors from University College Cork, Ireland in 1997. She acquired her Membership of the Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists in 2003. In 2008, she joined the team at the Assisted Conception Unit at the Jessop Wing

in Sheffield as a Clinical Research Fellow to pursue her interest in reproductive medicine. She was awarded Doctor of Medicine (MD) in July 2013 from the University of Sheffield. Her MD thesis focused on recurrent implantation failure and recurrent miscarriage and her research findings have been presented both nationally and internationally. She has an interest in fertility preservation particularly for oncology reasons and prior to moving to the UAE held the position of Clinical Director, Rotunda/IVF, the National Onco fertility Centre at Rotunda Hospital, Dublin.