Determinants of Infertility and Treatment Seeking Behaviour among Currently Married Women in India

Ramesh Chellan
India
Background

- Infertility is a worldwide problem affecting about 50 – 80 million couples during their reproductive lives (WHO, 1991).
- Infertility or the inability to have children, affects both men and women of reproductive age in all parts of the world.
- Infertility is the most neglected component in reproductive health programmes of many developing countries including India.
- Often researchers have generally neglected the subject of infertility.
- Recently, infertility has received more attention in India especially after International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action.
- Large number of private hospitals specialists for infertility had increased and these specialists have popularized their services by extensive advertising.
Objectives

• To understand the prevalence of infertility and treatment seeking behavior among currently married women in India.

• To examine the differences in prevalence of infertility and treatment seeking behaviour among currently married women in India.

• To examine the determinants of socio-economic and demographic factors on infertility problems and treatment seeking behaviour among currently married women in India.
Data Source

- Data for this study are drawn from the third round of District Level Household Survey (DLHS-3), 2007-08, conducted by International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai and various research organizations.

- A multi-stage stratified systematic sampling design was used to collect the information from respondents.

- The survey covered about 6,38,809 ever married women in the age group of 15-49 years.

- The field work was conducted during December 2007 to December 2008 covering 611 districts in the country.

- This is first time in India such a large scale survey has covered the information on infertility and infertility obtained on the basis of self-reported.
Methodology

• Estimate gross effect of socio-economic and demographic characteristics on prevalence of infertility and treatment seeking behaviour by cross tabulation.

• Net effect of socio-economic and demographic factors on infertility problem and treatment seeking behaviour by binary logistic regression.
Description of Variables for Analysis

**Dependent variables**

- **Infertility problem**
  (Whether woman reported any infertility problem or not)

- **Treatment seeking behaviour**
  (Whether woman sought any treatment for infertility problem or not)

**Independent variables**

- Region
- Residence
- Religion
- Caste/Tribe
- Education level
- Wealth Index
- Age of women
- Age at marriage
- Marital duration
Findings
Prevalence of Infertility among CMW in India

- Ever had Infertility Problem: 8.3
- Primary infertility: 6.3
- Secondary infertility: 2.0
Treatment seeking behaviour for infertility problem

- Ever had infertility problem: 80.5%
- Primary Infertility: 82.1%
- Secondary Infertility: 75.6%
## Source of Treatment for infertility problem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Treatment for infertility</th>
<th>Ever had infertility problem</th>
<th>Primary infertility</th>
<th>Secondary infertility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government allopathic</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private allopathic</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AYUSH</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbalist/traditional healer</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious/faith healing</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Women</strong></td>
<td><strong>50806</strong></td>
<td><strong>38789</strong></td>
<td><strong>11880</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inter-State variations: Prevalence of Infertility and Treatment Seeking Behaviour

• Prevalence of infertility is the highest in West Bengal (14.1 percent) and the lowest in Meghalaya (2.3 percent), national level is 8.3 percent.

• Treatment seeking: the lowest in Chhattisgarh (63.0 percent) and the highest in Punjab (85.1 percent), national level is 80.5 percent.
## Multivariate Results for Infertility Problem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant effects</th>
<th>No Significant effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Region: East and Central (+)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Urban (-)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Muslim (-)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Scheduled Caste (+)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Education: 11 and above (+)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wealth index: Rich, Richest (-)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Age group of 25-29 (+)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Age group of 40-44, 45-49 (+)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Age at consummation of marriage 18 and above (-)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Significant effects

- Urban (+)
- Muslim (+)
- Other Backward Castes (+)
- Education: 6-10, 11 and above (+)
- Wealth index: Middle, Rich, Richest (+)
- Age group of 25-29 (+)
- Age group of 40-44 (+)
- Age group of 45-49 (-)
- Marital duration: 5-9, 10-14, 15 and above (+)

### No Significant effects

- Region
- Age at consummation of marriage
Conclusions

• About 8.3 percent of CMW reported infertility related problem.

• Among those who reported infertility problems, more than three-fourths of women have sought treatment for infertility problem.

• Higher proportion had sought treatment from private allopathic.

• Urban women, Muslim women, older women and women with better of families are significantly less likely to report infertility problem.

• Scheduled Caste women and women with 11 and above years schooling are significantly more likely to report infertility problem.

• Urban women, Muslim women, OBC women, women with 6 and above years schooling, and with better of families and women whose marital duration five and above are significantly more likely to seek treatment for infertility problem.
Thank You