Breaking The Silence
Empowering Jordanian Infertile Couples To Decrease Gender Based Violence

JORDAN

Research Institutions:
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CONTEXT:
Domestic violence affects one in four Jordanian women in their lifetimes. Infertility is known to increase women’s risk of domestic violence. In Jordan, 16% of women and 9% of men self-reported infertility. These estimates are larger than the world average of 9% among women. Infertile individuals and couples may experience social isolation, stigma, humiliating curious questions, and family pressure.

For women, threats of divorce or the acquisition of a co-wife is an additional consequence. While women experience the brunt of the burden of these ill effects, men are also under pressure to continue the family lineage.

The sites for the study will include the Infertility and In Vitro Fertilization Center unit at the King Al Hussein Medical Center, Royal Medical Service (RMS) in Amman, and the IVF Center at the King Abdullah University Hospital (KAUH) within the Jordan University of Science and Technology in Irbid. Over 20,000 patients utilize these sites annually for fertility services.

PROJECT AIM:
To enhance survivor-centered health services and adapt and pilot test a group cognitive behavior and life-skills intervention to prevent the occurrence of domestic violence among couples attending fertility services in Jordan in preparation for a future randomized trial.

To achieve this aim, the project will conduct separate in-depth interviews with husbands and wives seeking fertility services to assess the impact of infertility on domestic violence, intervention preferences, and content validity of the outcome measure; adapt an existing women’s group cognitive behavioral and life skills intervention to include a men’s component; interrogate the theory of change through pre/5-months post surveys and pre/5-months post in-depth interviews with participants; improve healthcare providers recognition and response to domestic violence through training and pre/6-months post self-administered surveys; and disseminate study findings and improve the research capacity of consortium members.

STUDY CONTRIBUTION:
The proposed project is innovative in the fields of domestic violence prevention and survivor-centered fertility services in the Middle East. The study will collect preliminary data needed for a future trial of this combined fertility/psychosocial treatment to prevent IPV and will lay the groundwork for survivor-centered fertility care. The study will provide a strong basis for a future controlled evaluation of the intervention in Jordan, which will set the stage for potential scale-up throughout the country and adaptation or replication within similar sociocultural settings throughout the Middle East.