

THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL EFFECTS OF INFERTILITY ON A COUPLE:
A MEDICAL SOCIAL WORK PERSPECTIVE

by

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Dedicated to my parents,
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SUMMARY

THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL EFFECTS OF INFERTILITY ON A COUPLE: A MEDICAL SOCIAL WORK PERSPECTIVE

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This research is aimed at studying and describing the psycho-social effects of infertility on couples. Infertility is a reasonably new field of specialization in Medical Social Work, with a limited amount of research findings and literature available. A definite need for research therefore exists in this field.

The stages and procedures of research used in this study are firstly described, as well as the problems experienced with the study and definitions of terms used.

Subsequently, infertility is described in detail to provide the necessary knowledge of and insight into the problem and also to understand what infertile couples have to endure during the whole treatment period. This includes the initial interview, the medical investigations, the causes of infertility, the treatment procedures available and the psycho-social effects of infertility.

The roles, tasks, skills and knowledge of the medical social worker in a multi-professional health setting are described next, followed by a guideline for medical social workers as regards the infertile couple at an Infertility Clinic. This guideline describes the roles and tasks of the medical social worker regarding each step of the entire infertility treatment plan.

Hereafter the research findings and graphical representations of this exploratory and descriptive study of the psycho-social effects of infertility on couples, are presented and discussed. The hypothesis for this study: "Infertility has various psycho-social effects on a couple" is accordingly supported.

Finally the general summary, conclusions and recommendations arising from this study are provided.

OPSOMMING

DIE PSIGO-SOSIALE EFFEK VAN INFERTILITEIT OP 'N EGPAAR: 'N GENEESKUNDIGE MAATSKAPLIKEWERK-PERSPEKTIEF

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Die doel van hierdie navorsing was om die psigo-sosiale uitwerking van infertiliteit op 'n egpaar te bestudeer en te beskryf. Die veld van infertiliteit is 'n betreklik nuwe spesialiteitsterrein in Geneeskundige Maatskaplike Werk, met beperkte beskikbare navorsingsbevindings en ontoereikende literatuur.

Die stappe en prosedures van navorsing wat in hierdie studie gevolg is, word eerstens bespreek, gevolg deur 'n beskrywing van die probleme wat ervaar is, asook die definisies van die terme wat gebruik is.

Vervolgens, word infertiliteit breedvoerig bespreek, om sodoende die nodige kennis en insig met betrekking tot infertiliteit te voorsien, asook begrip van wat die infertiele egpaar gedurende die volkome behandelingsperiode moet deurmaak. Dit sluit die aanvanklike onderhoud, die mediese ondersoek, die oorsake van infertiliteit, die beskikbare behandelingsprosedures, asook die psigo-sosiale uitwerking van infertiliteit in.

Die rolle, take, vaardighede en kennis van die geneeskundige maatskaplike werker in 'n multi-professionele gesondheidsopset word hierna bespreek, gevolg deur 'n riglyn vir die geneeskundige maatskaplike werker tydens elke stap van die algehele behandelingsprogram.

In opvolging hiervan word die navorsingsbevindinge en grafiese voorstelle van hierdie verkennende en beskrywende studie oor die psigo-sosiale uitwerking van infertiliteit op die egpaar, bespreek. Die hipotese vir hierdie studie: "Infertiliteit het verskeie psigo-sosiale uitwerkings op 'n egpaar", word ooreenkomstig ondersteun.

Laastens word die algemene opsomming, gevolgtrekkings en aanbevelings vanuit hierdie studie gebied.

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