

THE SOCIOLOGICAL MEANING OF DONOR CONCEPTION

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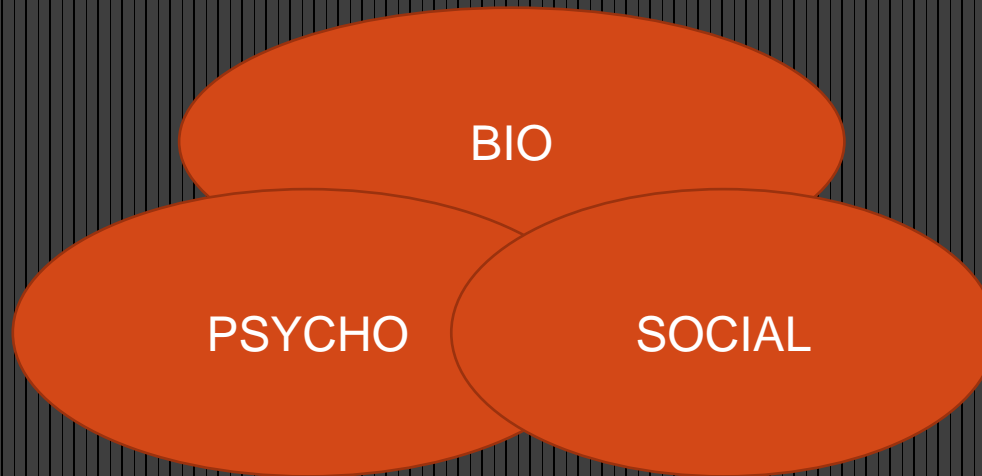
Presentation WA Reproductive Technology
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INTRODUCTION (1 of 2)

- “Our infertility and treatment are being discussed in public”
- Private troubles and public issues
- The clinical—creating a baby—medical treatment
- Another way of viewing
 - making and becoming parents
 - Having children and forming families
 - Incorporating but going beyond medical perspective

A BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL MODEL

- Creating families – biological, psychological and social



Treating infertility and building a family

INTRODUCTION (2 of 2)

- Social relationships and processes
- An example to illustrate FG Family
- "I think that our relationship with both sons is probably the best it has ever been and C and I are very happy that we took the plunge. For me it is a big burden off my mind"
- Contrasting views of gynaecologist and myself
- Being the new person/discipline on the block
- Relationships of vital importance—partnership
- Title given for this talk—social science
- Focus of exploring topic

OUTLINE

- Treating infertility and building families
- The family focus

Who and what is family?

Preparing to become family

Information sharing in families

Relationships within families

The social context

The involved professionals

TREATING INFERTILITY AND BUILDING FAMILIES (1 of 2)

- What I see through my lens— social relationships and social processes
- Many parties involved in DC—interactions
- In our book “Donor Insemination: International social science perspectives” Haimes and I listed and discussed
 - The users
 - The child
 - The semen providers
 - The medical profession
 - The community and regulation
 - Public opinion

It is the social relationships and social processes with all these that contribute to the sociological meaning of donor conception

Donor insemination but most of issues can be generalised to DC and ED

TREATING INFERTILITY AND BUILDING FAMILIES (2 of 2)

- A holistic vs. reductionist perspective
- Some areas receive attention at particular times and by particular contributors-research
- The challenges of a holistic approach
- Social science and medicine the evidence base
- A partnership model is emerging
- The advent of the psychosocial counselling, based on social science knowledge

THE FAMILY FOCUS (1 of 6)

- Taking a different approach than in book
- 1. WHO AND WHAT IS FAMILY?
- Question who is part of your family?
- Blood is thicker than water—dominant
- Child is biologically or genetically linked
- Shifting our thinking is difficult
- The notion of kinship
- New forms of families
- The importance of language

THE FAMILY FOCUS (2 of 6)

2. PREPARATION FOR FAMILY BUILDING

Assistance to change from dominant thinking

Confidence as a key issue—research from
Germany

Congruity in relationships –Research NZ and
Germany

Dealing with fears and anxieties

Person, couple, family, friends, social—perceived
stigma

The impact of other families experiences

Psychoeducation and counselling

A child is not the cure for infertility

THE FAMILY FOCUS (3 of 6)

3. INFORMATION SHARING WITHIN FAMILIES

The old era and the new era

Language---secrecy and openness—info sharing

NZ study 50% had shared or asked for help in doing so. Significant regret that not shared

“Mum why are you looking away?”

Two issues impact-- info sharing within family and anonymity of donors

THE FAMILY FOCUS (4 of 6)

- Impact of secrets in families—current research
- Power and secrets—I am deciding for you
- Why would you not be honest?
- Example of 9 year old in lecture
- Growing up with knowledge
- Never remember a time when did not know
- Return to FG family

THE FAMILY FOCUS (5 of 6)

- 4. RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN FAMILIES
- The impact of seeking contact research fathers
- An family example from WA. “C”
- Where does the donor fit?
- The desire for contact with half-siblings
- Research on donor motivations
- Extended families? Notion of kinship.
- Redefining families conference
- The need for boundaries

THE FAMILY FOCUS (6 of 6)

- The donor and his/her family –research
- Preparation for donors
- Conference in Melbourne last year.
- The advent of “personal donors”
- Emerging area for consideration
- Chapter “Understanding and managing relationships in donor assisted families”
in Donor conception for life. K. Fine (Ed)
Social relationships and processes. Current
research

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT (1 of 2)

- Change is occurring
- The beginning and ending of life
- The impact of the consumer voice- Vic
- How is the area to be managed
- The work of Robert Blank

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT (2 Of 2)

Regulatory mechanisms - Robert Blank

Individual Clinician

Programme guidelines

Professional association guidelines

Commission/committee/task force

Government guidelines

Licensing authority

Legislation

THE CHALLENGES FOR PROFESSIONALS

- This field is multidisciplinary.
- Understanding and acknowledging different perspectives and contributions
- The knowledge base
- The research base
- The value base
- Power amongst professionals

CONCLUSIONS

- Treating infertility and building families
- Social relationships and processes to the fore
- Private troubles and public issues
- A focus on all the involved parties

“It wasn’t our ideal way of having a family but it is our ideal family”