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Lifestyle factors responsible for infertility among women

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Statement of the Problem:

There are multiple contributing factors responsible for women's infertility (defined as "failure to achieve a pregnancy"). However, the author of this work argues that lifestyle choices can also affect being able to conceive. Key lifestyle factors impacting fertility include weight, smoking, diet, exercise, psychological stress, and caffeine and alcohol consumption. It is possible to favourably modify the practices

Objectives and Methodology:

This evidence-based review paper primarily aims to highlight the impact of lifestyle behaviours on infertility among women. Also, it briefly outlines what can be done to improve reproductive outcomes. The author has used Secondary data (largely 'qualitative'), and method of data analysis is descriptive.

Findings:

Fertility requires the eggs to be very healthy. Lifestyle factors trouble release of healthy eggs from the ovaries, thereby impacting on women's capacity to reproduce. Followings are contributing factors related to lifestyle that influence infertility among women:

- Diet Pattern: With unhealthy diet pattern, capacity of the cells surrounding the egg decreases. This makes chances of conception complicated. Diet rich in antioxidants is useful in planning conception.
- Weight: Excess body weight has significant impact on ovulation. It (a) decreases the chance of pregnancy, and (b) increases the chance of miscarriage (even if women are ovulating).
- Smoking: It has major adverse effects on egg quality. Among women who smoke, natural fertility is decreased.
- Alcohol: Alcohol consumption reduces fertility.
- Caffeine: Female fertility is influenced to a greater extent by caffeine (a substance found in coffee and tea) intake. It is also associated with miscarriage.
- Intercourse Frequency: Frequency of intercourse is crucial in attempting to conceive. According to some studies, suggested sex frequency is every one to two days around the expected time of ovulation.
- Stress and relaxation: Anxiety, stress, and depression also influence chances of conception. Reduced chances of pregnancy are noticed among women experiencing these symptoms.

This paper briefly concludes that any unhealthy lifestyle practices threaten women's ability to conceive. Modifications in practices increases chances of conception.

Keywords: Lifestyle Behaviours, Contributing Factors, Infertility, and Women

Biography

Santosh Kumar Mishra is a Independent Researcher (Scholar), having retired (on June 30, 2020) from Population Education Resource Centre, Department of Lifelong Learning & Extension, S.N.D.T. Women's University, Mumbai, India. I underwent training in demography, with award of Government of India Fellowship, during 1986-1987 from the IIPS, Mumbai. Also, I acquired Ph. D. from University of Patna in 1999. My other qualifications include Post-Master's Diploma in Adult & Continuing Education, Certificate Course on Hospital and Health Care Management, and Diploma in Human Resource Development. I have authored (some co-authored) 5 booklets, 4 books, 23 book chapters, 105 journal articles, 2 monographs, 7 research studies, & 104 papers for national & international conferences (some with bursary). I have been awarded with Certificate of Excellence in Reviewing for 2017, 2018, 2021, 2022, & 2024; and conferred with Excellence of Research Award for outstanding contribution & recognition in the field of agriculture in the year 2021.