

Local referral pathway for fertility preservation(FP) services; counselling patients in district general hospital(DGH)

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WHY THIS PROJECT

- Patients are referred to us to ‘discuss FP.’ In a DGH we make onward referrals for FP to fertility centres(1). A lack of information can add emotional burden to what is an anxiety inducing decision(2).
- How are we counselling these patients in our unit and can we improve?

WHAT WE DID

- Retrospective data collection about patients attending fertility clinic in our DGH to discuss FP over the last 2 years
- Collected data via a questionnaire asking patients to evaluate the service and suggest improvements to our FP counselling.

THE RESULTS

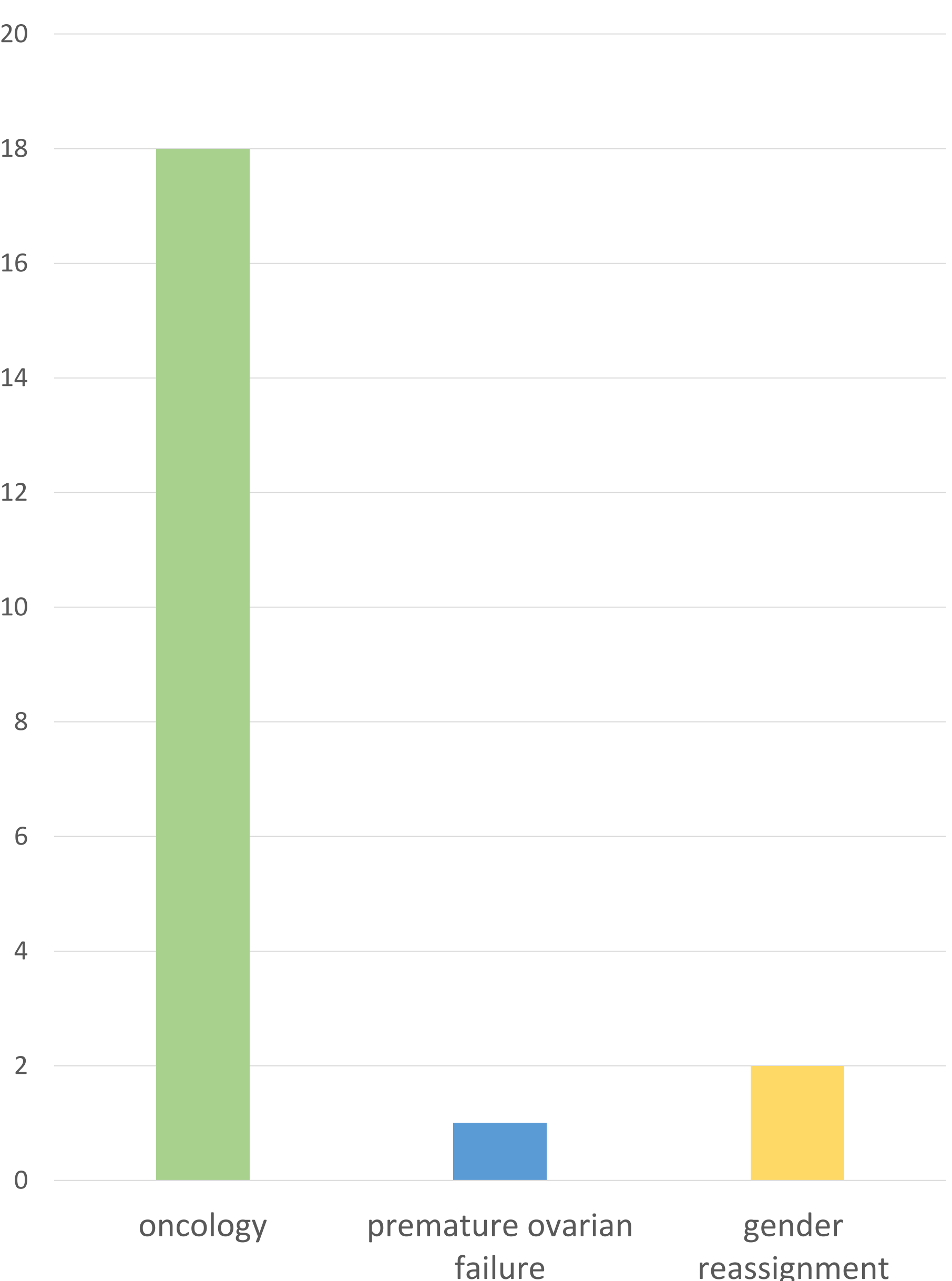
What are the reasons for referral to clinic?

- 21 patients attended our DGH fertility clinic from January 2020 to March 2022
- 6 of 18 oncology patients attended for consultation after cancer treatment
- 3 oncology patients had an AMH performed.
- 11 oncology patients presented prior to starting cancer treatment. 6 presented afterward, but 1 had frozen embryos in storage

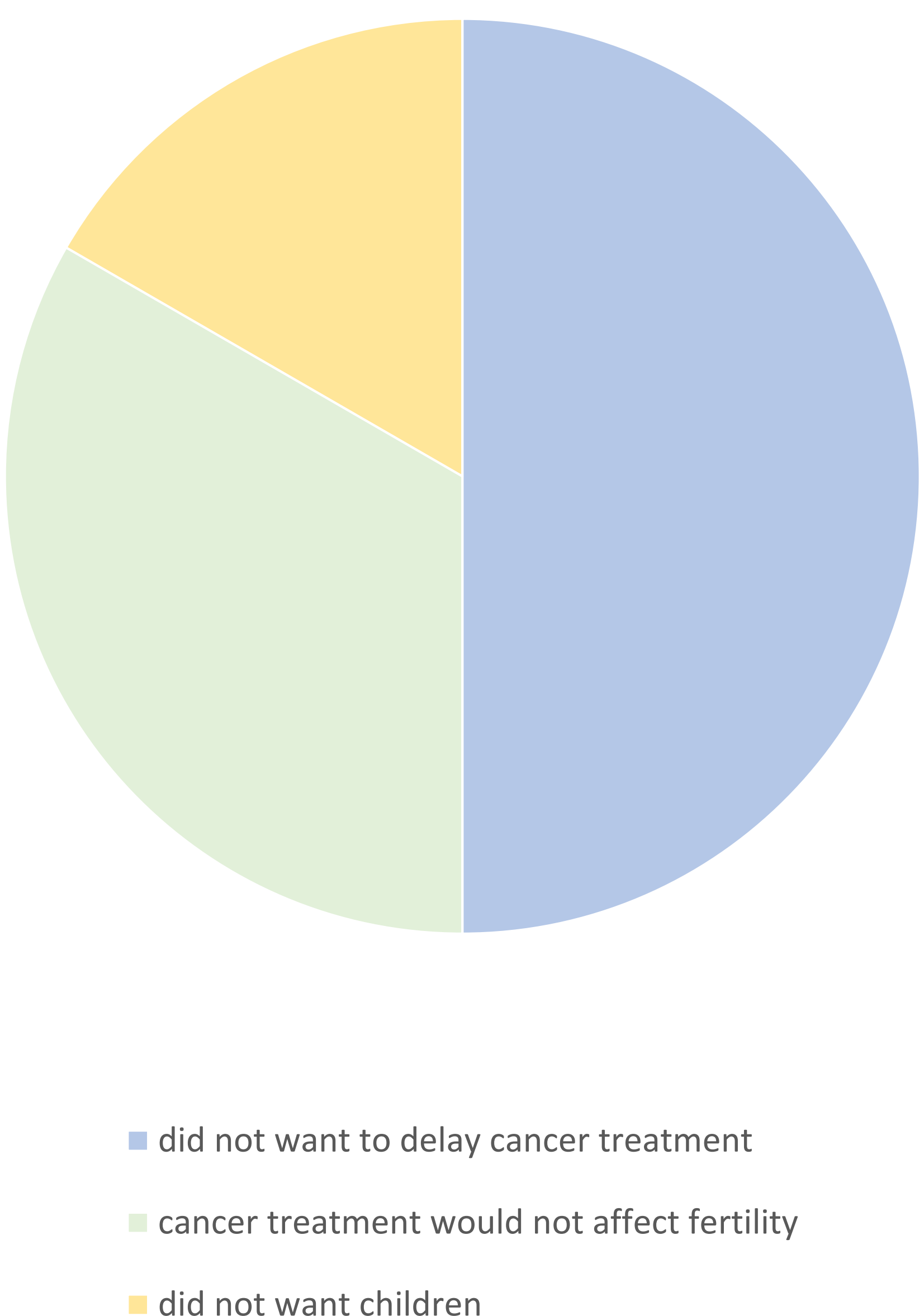
How many women accepted onward referral?

- 13 patients accepted referral for FP; 3 were not eligible for NHS treatment as they had children.
- 1 patient’s AMH was too low after chemo- & radiotherapy to consider treatment
- 1 DNA’d the appointments
- 6 declined referral for FP

Reasons for Referral



Reasons FP declined



QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

“I won’t use IVF when there are plenty of children who need parents”

“I wish I’d been told about routes other than egg freezing, eg. adoption”

“My questions were addressed appropriately”

“very satisfied with the care & attention I received”

“quick and options were well explained”

DISCUSSION

- Explore options other than FP in consultation eg. adoption, egg donation, surrogacy
- The main reason women declined referral for FP was a worry about delaying treatment for cancer.
- Consider conducting joint clinic with oncology team to discuss timeline and implications on cancer treatment if delayed for FP treatment.

References

1. Female Fertility Preservation Guideline of the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology [Internet]. 1st ed. European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology; 2020 [cited 5 September 2021].
2. Lawson A, Klock S, Pavone M, Hirshfeld-Cytron J, Smith K, Kazer R. Psychological Counseling of Female Fertility Preservation Patients. Journal of Psychosocial Oncology. 2015;33(4):333-353.