

KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS TOWARDS FERTILITY PRESERVATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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BACKGROUND

- . Fertility preservation (FP) provides the opportunity for individuals who may have varied reasons for deferring childbirth by protecting oocytes, sperm, embryos, or reproductive tissue that makes a biological family possible in the future.
- . Little is known about level of awareness and attitude of healthcare professionals in Sub-Saharan Africa towards FP.

OBJECTIVE

To assess knowledge and attitude of healthcare professionals towards fertility preservation in sub-Saharan Africa

METHODS

This study was a cross-sectional survey conducted among 318 healthcare professionals in Ghana over one month

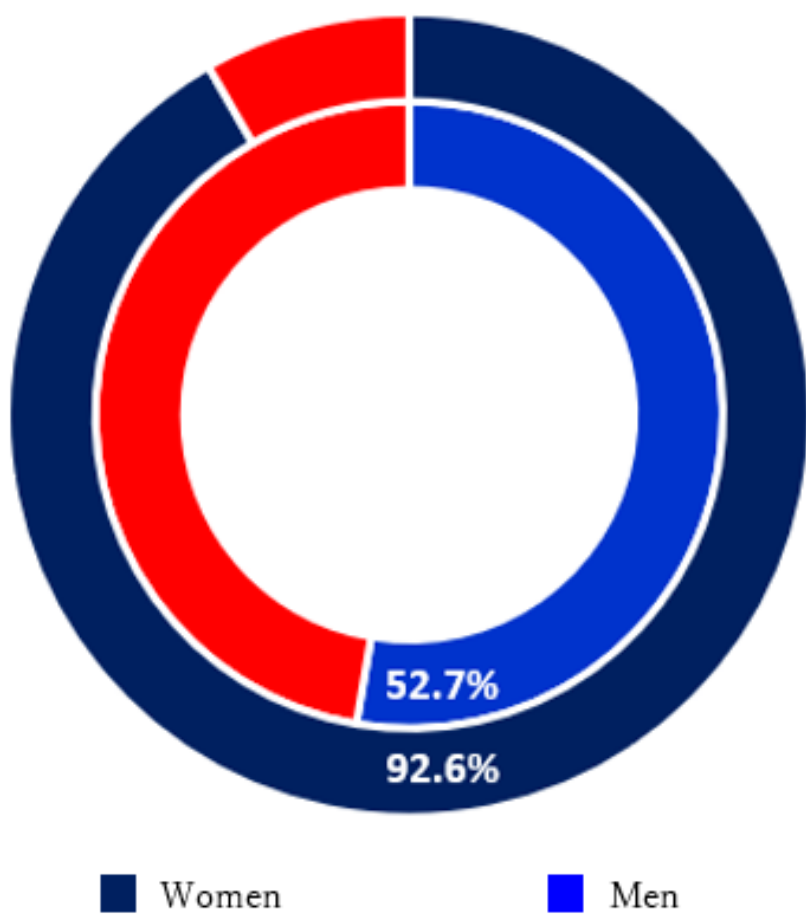
Structured pre-tested online self-administered questionnaire distributed nationwide. Data was obtained on sociodemographic of participants, knowledge on fertility decline, fertility preservation and their attitudes to fertility preservation.

Resulting data were analyzed using SPSS-22. Chi-square test and Student’s t-test were used to assess significant differences between the variables with $p<0.05$ considered significant.

Study had ethical approval.



Knowledge of age-related fertility decline



Demographics vs knowledge of age-related fertility decline

Variables	Aware of age-related fertility decline among women				P-value	Aware of age-related fertility decline among men				P-value
	Yes (N=285)		No (N=26)			Yes (N=164)		No (N=147)		
	n	(%)	n	%		n	(%)	n	%	
Age (years SD)	33.2	±6.9	34.4	±8.6	0.428 [#]	34.2	±7.9	32.4	±5.8	0.020[#]
Age group					0.106					0.263
20-29 years	99	(34.7)	6	(23.1)		54	(32.9)	51	(34.7)	
30-39 years	157	(55.1)	14	(53.8)		87	(53.0)	84	(57.1)	
40+ years	29	(10.2)	6	(23.1)		23	(14.0)	12	(8.2)	
Gender					0.492					0.899
Male	77	(27.0)	9	(34.6)		46	(28.0)	40	(27.2)	
Female	208	(73.0)	17	(65.4)		118	(72.0)	107	(72.8)	
Years in profession					0.017					0.213
1-5 years	192	(67.4)	15	(57.7)		108	(65.9)	99	(67.3)	
6-10 years	57	(20.0)	2	(7.7)		28	(17.1)	31	(21.1)	
10-15 years	25	(8.8)	6	(23.1)		17	(10.4)	14	(9.5)	
15+ years	11	(3.9)	3	(11.5)		11	(6.7)	3	(2.0)	
Marital Status					0.122					0.715
Single	123	(43.2)	16	(61.5)		71	(43.3)	68	(46.3)	
Married	157	(55.1)	9	(34.6)		89	(54.3)	77	(52.4)	
Cohabiting	5	(1.8)	1	(3.8)		4	(2.4)	2	(1.4)	
Religion					0.423					0.727
Christian	270	(94.7)	23	(88.5)		156	(43.3)	137	(93.2)	
Muslim	10	(3.5)	2	(7.7)		5	(3.0)	7	(4.8)	
Others	5	(1.8)	1	(3.8)		3	(1.8)	3	(2.0)	
Knowledge of fertility preservation					<0.001					-
Yes	184	(64.6)	6	(23.1)		-	-	-	-	
No	101	(35.4)	20	(76.9)		-	-	-	-	

independent t-test. The p-values of all others chi-squared test

RESULTS

While 51.6% of respondents indicated female fertility declines from age 35-39years, 60.9% indicated male fertility declines from 50years. A significant 64.6% participants were aware of fertility preservation ($p<0.001$), 52.1% of whom learned of FP from their professional training, and 25% through social media. HCPs with up to 5years experience were more knowledgeable on ARFD ($P<0.01$). Significantly, 87.4% and 83.2% knew about egg and sperm freezing respectively.

While 33.1% would consider FP, 36.7% will not and 30.2% were unsure. Cost would be the main barrier to FP in 70% participants and concerns about hormonal medication for 33.2%. Majority (65.6%) support FP for cancer patients and 59.2% support fertility preservation for social reasons ($p<0.003$).

CONCLUSION

Our study found overwhelming knowledge on female age-related fertility decline, but lower level of knowledge on fertility preservation among HCPs in Ghana.

One-third of HCPs would consider undertaking FP. Healthcare professionals demonstrate greater support for FP for cancer patients than for social reasons.

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