

Publication

Oncofertility Decision Making: Findings from Israeli Adolescents and Parents

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PURPOSE: To date, few studies qualitatively investigate adolescent oncofertility decision making. This qualitative study seeks to understand the experiences of adolescents and parents in making oncofertility decisions within the pronatalist context of Israeli society. **METHODS:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Israel with adolescents between the ages of 12 and 19 years who were in remission for at least 2 months and had been offered fertility preservation (FP) of sperm, ova, or ovary cryopreservation, and their parents, separately. Transcripts were thematically analyzed. **RESULTS:** Thirty-five interviews were conducted-16 with adolescents and 19 with parents-representing 20 cases of FP decision making. Adolescents and parents do not necessarily view decision making in the same way. Both parties mention a variety of factors in and justifications for FP decisions. Although most participants imagine the adolescent will use cryopreserved biological materials only if s/he experiences reproductive difficulties, nearly all participants do not recall having discussed what to do with these materials in the case of death. Many adolescents and parents feel comfortable waiting to take further action regarding adolescent fertility until the topic has greater relevance to the adolescent's life. Satisfaction with FP decision making is nearly unanimous, regardless of whether FP was pursued. **CONCLUSION:** As in other cultural contexts, Israeli adolescents and parents demonstrate multifaceted decision making with respect to oncofertility. A significant finding from this study suggests that health professionals shy from discussing posthumous planning of cryopreserved materials with adolescent cancer patients and their parents. Further investigation is warranted to determine whether this is a uniquely Israeli phenomenon, the cause for it, and how to overcome it.

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