

35. THE HIDDEN CAUSES OF INFERTILITY DIAGNOSED AT TERTIARY CARE

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INTRODUCTION:

Infertility affects 1 in 6 couples seeking a pregnancy. The causes of Infertility for these couples are numerous. Some of these causes are hidden and not detectable by routine diagnostic procedures. Many of these hidden causes are detectable only at the level of tertiary care management.

OBJECTIVE:

To evaluate the types and prevalence of hidden causes of Infertility which cannot be detected during investigations using routine diagnostic procedures.

METHODOLOGY:

Data from the records of 179 Infertile couples undergone in-vitro fertilization procedures at Vindana Reproductive Health Centre from January 2003 to December 2005 were analysed.

RESULTS:

Of the 179 couples 98.8% (n=177) had primary Infertility. The major causes for seeking assisted

reproduction procedures (ART) in order of prevalence were Tubal factor 42.5%, Endometriosis 26.8%, Male factor 19.6%, Unexplained Infertility in 14.2% and polycystic ovarian disease in 11.7%. However there were other causes in combination with these factors among few couples. While the couples were going through the ART programme it was found that 10% of the female partners of couples of the study population were poor responders, had very poor follicular recruitment / follicular growth and their cycles were abandoned during stimulation. In 2 women (1.12%) although there was a good follicular growth, they were empty follicles and no ova could be retrieved. Fertilization failure was observed for 7 of the couples (3.9%) due to various causes diagnosed during assisted reproduction procedure. The causes responsible for failure of fertilization were: no sperm- zona binding in 2 cases, organisms in the egg/ follicular fluid in 1 case, organisms in the sperm (which could not be detected earlier) in 2 cases, and very immature eggs in 2 women where one of them had polycystic ovarian disease. Dysfunctional zona pellucida was found in one woman where there were multiple pronuclei in 78% of the eggs retrieved.

CONCLUSION:

There are hidden causes of infertility diagnosed at tertiary care which could not be detected during routine or special diagnosed procedures. If these are diagnosed even at tertiary care, definite treatment plans could be made available for such couples.