

**GENDER, CULTURE AND INFERTILITY
IN CAMBODIAN SOCIETY**

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ABSTRACT

This study used qualitative descriptive research. The main objective of this study was to understand what are the gender, and cultural factors that relate to infertility management strategies in Cambodian society.

This study utilized research methods including in-depth interviews with informants, key informant interviews and non-participant observation. Content analysis was used for data analysis. The sample of this research consisted of 9 infertile couples. This sample consisted of all those who accepted interviewing by the researcher, so only 9 women and 4 men were involved in this research.

The result shows that the gender practices in households are that women had equality to men in some areas such as decisions on seeking care, or decision making on children education where there was an adopted child. However in some areas the women still had less power than men such as domestics' work which women did alone. Men just helped in temporary jobs that women could not do for example, fixing something broken. The men had more power than the women in terms of sexuality. For reproductive health, it is the women who take all the responsibility. When they wanted to do birth spacing. Women had to be the one who practice birth control.

The cultural belief on the cause of infertility is overwhelming that it is caused by female problems, i.e. hot womb, hot blood, miscarriage, history of taking birth control pill, etc.. The men believe that infertility is rarely caused by male problems even though the truth is that male and female problems are equally responsible for infertility. Men blame it on women because reproduction is seen as a female responsibility.

The result of the study show, there were six patterns of health seeking behavior.1) The professional sector only; 2) The professional sector to popular sector or folk sector; 3) The professional sector to the folk sector to the popular sector; 4) The popular sector to professional sector; 5) The popular sector to the professional sector to the folk sector; 6) the popular sector to the folk sector to the professional sector. The patterns of health seeking were related to beliefs about the cause of infertility which were that most of the cause comes from the female problems. These beliefs lead the women to seek treatment more than husbands. The husbands just checked their sperm for one to two times or made their decision to have second wife.

KEY WORDS: GENDER/CULTURE/INFERTILITY

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