

## ABSTRACT

Subfertility is not only a medical problem but also it affects women's psychological status and the relationship with husband, extended family and the society as a whole. This study was carried out to describe and quantify the socioeconomic and family problems as well as the psychological distress experienced by subfertile women attending subfertility clinic of CSHW and to find out the associated demographic, economic and subfertility related factors. Family problems were analyzed as problems with extended family members and problems with husband separately.

The study was carried out among 422 women who were subfertile for at least one year duration and attended the subfertile clinic at CSHW during July and August 2011. Interviews were carried out using questionnaires to assess social and family problems and their socioeconomic characteristics. GHQ 30 questionnaire was used to assess psychological distress.

According to the results, 23.3% of the women of the study sample experienced socioeconomic problems most of the time. It was 21.4% and 25.6% for the problems with family members and husband respectively. Women who were 26 to 35 years of age, had a husband with low educational level (up to or below GCE O/L), occupied in partly or unskilled jobs and having an income below Rs. 10000 had significantly more socio economic problems. Low educational level (up to or below GCE O/L) of the women and their husbands, occupation of the husband (unskilled workers or no occupation), being Tamil or Muslim and being subfertile for 2 to 8 years were significantly associated with experiencing more problems with family members. Also women who experienced more problems with husband had an educational level up to or below GCE O/L, had a husband in similar educational level, were occupied as partly skilled or unskilled workers or had an income less than Rs. 10000. Secondary subfertility was associated significantly with experiencing more problems with extended family members and secondary subfertile women who didn't have a child had significantly more problems with family members.

Among the study sample, 44.1% of the women interviewed had psychological distress. Development of psychological distress was associated with low education level of the husband (up to or below GCE O/L), occupation of the husband (no occupation or unskilled workers),

being Tamil or Muslim and being subfertile for more than 2 years. Being secondary subfertile without a child was also associated with psychological distress.

As those results pointed out, a considerable proportion of subfertile women in the study sample experienced socioeconomic and family problems and psychological distress. Therefore it is necessary plan health care for subfertile women considering those aspects and to improve the community awareness.

**Key words:** subfertility, socioeconomic, psychological, problems