

# Perceptions of oncology nurses regarding fertility preservation and providing oncofertility services for men of childbearing age with cancer

(生殖年齢にある男性がん患者に対する妊孕性温存と支援提供に関する看護師の認識)

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**Objectives:** As survival improves for cancer patients, fertility has become an increasingly important issue worldwide. However, studies revealed that cancer patients were not well informed about the fertility risk and the utilization of fertility preservation (FP) methods was low. This study investigated the knowledge, thoughts, and attitudes of oncology nurses regarding FP for male cancer patients of childbearing age, and for offering counseling or oncofertility services for the men in their care in China.

**Methods:** Data was collected from 18 oncology nurses in Southwest China through voluntary self-report in-depth interviews. The qualitative interview data were analyzed using a descriptive phenomenology method based on the lived experience of the nurses.

**Results:** The interviewees repeated six commonalities of concern about FP, namely: insufficient knowledge of FP; inadequate nursing education regarding FP; importance of offering FP services to cancer patients; legal vulnerability if FP information is withheld from patients; role of the nurse in FP counseling; and barriers to discussing FP in practice. Nurses had a positive attitude toward FP, but most had no role in routinely informing male patients of their options, and they perceived that the discussion of FP was outside their scope of practice.

**Conclusions:** This study offers insight into the perceptions of oncology nurses in a developing country regarding the provision of FP services for adult male cancer patients. Highlighted is the lack of knowledge and confidence to provide oncofertility services among Chinese oncology nurses. The results led to a recommendation that local fertility nurses should be trained through new education. Furthermore, nurse-led clinics are desirable. Future research should focus on the effectiveness of nurse participation in FP counseling and referral, and how to improve the professional confidence of oncology nurses for addressing FP issues.