# PERCEIVED STRESS LEVELS AND SPECIFIC STRESSORS IN PATIENTS UNDERGOING PLANNED OOCYTE CRYOPRESERVATION



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#### **PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES**

Despite the drastic increase in planned oocyte cryopreservation (OC) usage, published data on the psychological experiences of these patients is lacking<sup>1,2</sup> **Objective:** To assess the perceived stress levels (PSLs) and specific stressors in patients before and after planned OC

#### MATERIAL & METHODS

**Design/Population:** Cross-sectional study of 1st time planned OC patients at our high-volume academic fertility center from October 2022 to May 2024. Participants received a modest gift card compensation.

#### **Instruments:**

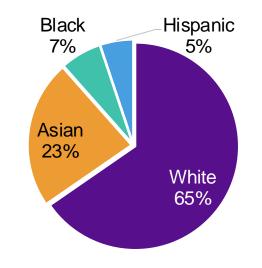
- **RedCap Survey:** administered pre- and post-OC consisting of demographic questions, Perceived Stress Scale<sup>3</sup>, 3-Item Loneliness Scale<sup>4</sup>, and an open-ended question to assess top 3 stressors
- **Zoom Interview:** 20-minute semi-structured conversation guided by 14 predetermined open-ended questions

#### Data analysis:

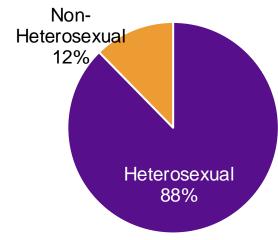
- **Quantitative:** Paired t-test with a p<0.05 considered significant
- Qualitative: Interview transcripts were coded by 3 independent coders using the constant comparative method<sup>5</sup>

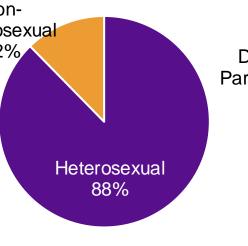
## RESULTS – OVERVIEW & DEMOGRAPHICS

- 122 out of 470 invited pts (26.0%) agreed to participate
- **81 out of 122 pts (66.4%)** with a median age of 33 years (range: 26-42 years) completed both pre- and post-OC surveys, from which 20 pts (24.7%) were randomly chosen for the interview

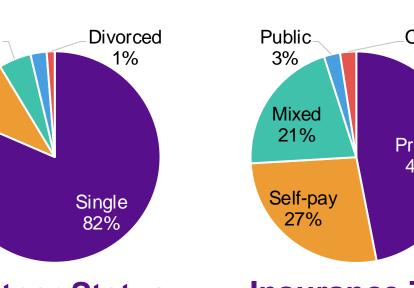


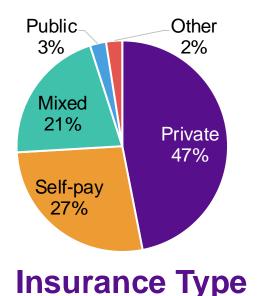
Race/Ethnicity



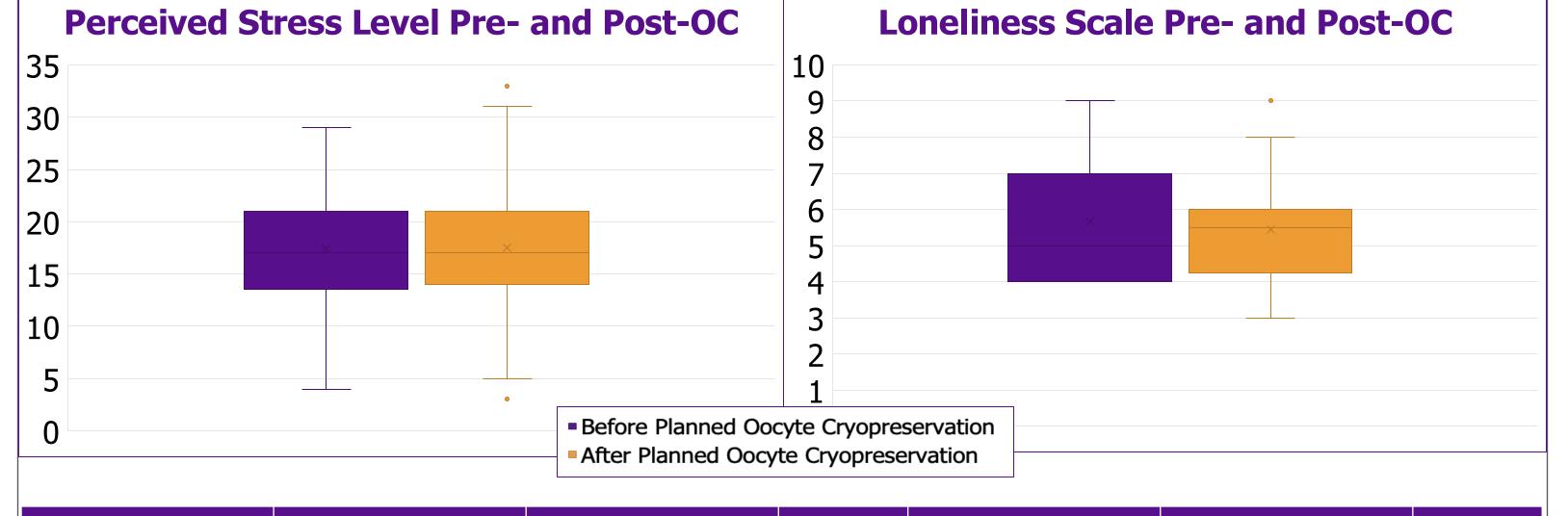








## RESULTS - VALIDATED INSTRUMENT SCORES

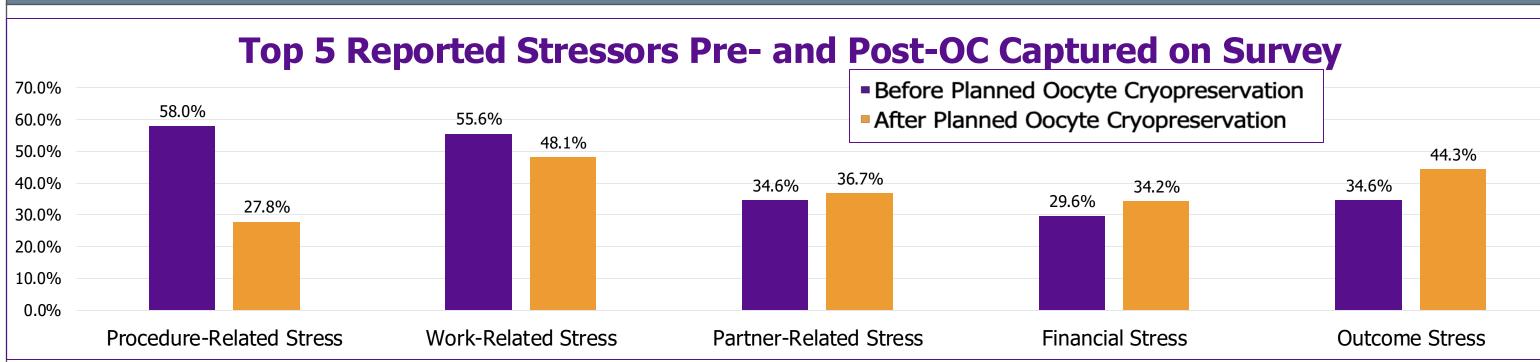


	Median PSLs (Range)	Score Interpretation	P-value	Median Loneliness Score (Range)	Score Interpretation	P-value
Pre-OC	17 (4-29)	Moderate Stress	0.81	5 (4-9)	Not Lonely	0.26
Post-OC	17 (3-33)	Moderate Stress		5.5 (3-9)	Not Lonely	

When reviewing individual questions, participants were more nervous and stressed pre-OC (p<0.04), and felt that they lacked companionship more pre-OC (p<0.04)

Planned OC was found to be a moderately stressful experience for patients, with stressors shifting from procedure-related to outcomefocused after OC.

## **RESULTS – QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS**



Interviews provided in depth descriptions of the stressors captured by survey responses while also highlighting new nuanced stressors:

#### **Outcome - Self-Blame**

"They said I only had like 11 follicles, or something kind of low, and I really perseverated on it. I read about it and I actually cried. I was like, oh my God, I don't have that many follicles I felt mad at

myself."

#### Family - Cultural Stress

"Another thing was culturally, I didn't tell my mom, I'm with her. I live with her. I had to hide my medications. I bought a mini-fridge. I kept it in my room, covered it up."

#### **Work - Lack of Control**

"My period didn't come when I thought it was gonna come, and I was like oh, no, no, I'm going to be on service, and like I just felt like I didn't have any control over that."

## CONCLUSIONS

- Planned OC was a moderately stressful experience with a change in type of stressor before and after the process
- Pre-OC stress was mainly related to procedure logistics and work, while post-OC stress was concerning partners, finances, and outcomes
- Our findings can be used to enhance patient-centered care and develop targeted interventions that address specific stressors for planned OC patients

#### REFERENCES

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4. Hughes ME, A Short Scale for Measuring Loneliness in Large Surveys: Results From Two Population-Based Studies. Res Aging. 2004;26(6):655-72 5. Barney G. Glaser, The Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis, Social Problems, Volume 12, Issue 4, Spring 1965, Pages 436–445, https://doi.org/10.2307/798843