Perceptions, Experiences and Emotional Supports for Male Infertility, a review
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Abstract
Although male-factor infertility accounts for approximately 45% of all infertility problems (1), there is a lack in the literature in the interdisciplinary aspect of men’s perceptions of their diagnosis of infertility and the types of social outlets they have available to them to help them understand and live a successful life with this diagnosis. We therefore conducted a preliminary meta-analysis to characterize types of emotional supports used by men diagnosed with infertility had access to, as well as their perceptions and emotions related to infertility. We conducted an in-depth interview that included exclusion criteria to determine what studies would be included in the review. It was clear from the search that there is not nearly as much support for those with male infertility in North America as there is in the UK. Similarly, there appears to be a lot more access for women suffering from infertility than there is for males.

Introduction
An estimated 14% of married couples are infertile in Canada, the United States, Denmark, Scotland and Switzerland (2). Reason for infertility is a male or female fertility issue in 30-35% of all cases, 20% of cases is attributable to both partners, 10% is unexplained (3). Male infertility accounts for 45% of all cases of infertility (1), 50-60% of those who are diagnosed will continue to bear a child (1). The research and technology available to help those diagnosed with infertility bear a child is much more comfortable dealing with the woman’s body, whether it be male or female-factor infertility (3). The experiences and perceptions of women diagnosed with infertility is well documented in the literature. However, the perceptions, experiences and support outlets available to men diagnosed with infertility is unrepresented (1).

Study Design
Methodology
• Meta-analysis
• Interdisciplinary approach
• Database: Scopus
• Search terms: Male, Men, Male infertility, Perceptions, Experiences, Formal supports, Support, Gender, Masculinity

Inclusion Criteria
• Year: 1990 – 2012
• Setting: USA, Canada, UK
• Language: English
• Study design: Interviews, Surveys, Focus groups, Meta-analysis

Exclusion Criteria
• Full article unavailable
• Studies with animals
• Clinical biological studies
• Review papers
• Setting outside of inclusion criteria
• Language: Non-English
• Date of study outside of inclusion criteria

Preliminary Findings
• Emotional experiences include grief, loss, isolation, personal inadequacy, loss of control (5)
• Infertile men report lower sexual and personal quality of life (7)
• Infertile men have difficulty discussing fertility concerns with friends and family and avoid social situations (7)
• Men are less open about male-factor infertility than female factor infertility (8)
• The greater the social support and recipocity, the lower the feelings of loneliness for infertile men (9)
• Men are less likely to join support groups for infertility than women (11)
• Men have a greater marital adjustment with the acceptance of the inability to have a child (12)
• Sexual stress in infertile men may be because of performance anxiety rather than a lessened sexual satisfaction associated with infertility (14)

Preliminary Causes of Male Infertility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Database</th>
<th>Major Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>Russell Webb, Judith Danilk</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Universtiy of British Columbia</td>
<td>In-depth interviews</td>
<td>Six white, Euro-American men</td>
<td>Scopus</td>
<td>Seven themes that were seen in common in in-depth interviews with six men. The themes are not isolated, but rather intertwining</td>
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<td>2)</td>
<td>John Anderson, Sherry Fer, Denise Jasmin, Lee national survey data</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Survey of men 15-44</td>
<td>4109 sexually experienced men aged 15-44</td>
<td>Scopus</td>
<td>The percentage of men seeking help appears to lower than the percentage of women (7.5 versus 13.4%) based on the comparison with another study previously done (however, the questions asked were different)</td>
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<td>3)</td>
<td>Smith R, Walsh T, Shreadel AW, Turek PJ.</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Surveys from the University of Utah</td>
<td>Cross-sectional analysis</td>
<td>537 men</td>
<td>Pubmed</td>
<td>Men who perceive isolated male factor infertility have a lower sexual and personal quality of life in comparison with those men without perceived male factor infertility</td>
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<td>4)</td>
<td>van Baten E, Trienek K, Venkram J</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>108 couples</td>
<td>Pubmed</td>
<td>The perception of diagnosis was different from the medical diagnosis in 38% of the cases</td>
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<td>5)</td>
<td>Jon-Riis USA</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Comparative descriptive</td>
<td>62 couples</td>
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<td>Although men and women shared perceived loneliness, they had similar perceptions of their available social support. The greater social support and recipocity, the lower the feelings of loneliness for both male and female</td>
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<td>6)</td>
<td>Huf et al.</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Structured interviews</td>
<td>38 Pulled</td>
<td>Pubmed</td>
<td>The emotional response to a diagnosis of infertility is greatly influenced by a gender-specific diagnosis. Men’s response to infertility is closer to the woman’s response if there is a male-factor diagnosis of infertility. However, if a male-factor diagnosis has not been determined, men differ from women in their response to infertility</td>
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References

Citation
The End of the Line: Infertile Men and Masculinities 5: 1-25
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3) Smith R, Walsh T, Shreadel AW, Turek PJ.
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5) Jon-Riis USA
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