

Question in Project:

FReDA-W2b - Questions on the topics of women's fertility, affective touching behavior, sexual orientation, and transnational families (English Version)

Question Topic:

Society & social affairs/ Family & parenting

Construct:

Estimated probabilities of pregnancies

Question Text:

In your opinion, what is the probability that a woman aged 40 to 45 will become pregnant through fertility treatments?

Instruction:

Please give a percentage value from 0-100.

Answer Categories:

Version 1

0 percent
1 to 19 percent
20 to 39 percent
40 to 59 percent
60 to 79 percent
80 to 100 percent

Version 2

0 to 9 percent
10 to 29 percent
30 to 49 percent
50 to 69 percent
70 to 89 percent
90 to 100 percent

Version 3
open answer

Cognitive Techniques:

Comprehension Probing, Category Selection Probing, Difficulty Probing

Findings for Answer Categories:

Experimental variation and cognitive follow-up questions:

As part of the cognitive pretest, in addition to the question version developed by FReDA (version 1), two other variations were tested that differed in the design of the response categories (version 2) or contained no response categories (version 3).

The draft question developed by the principals (version 1) used closed response categories and contained a "0 percent" response category and five additional ascending categories in increments of 20 or 21. Responses that were correct according to the client were either at the low end of a response category (Question 1: approximately 80 percent, category: "80 to 100 percent"; Question 2: approximately 40 percent, category: "40 to 59 percent") or at the high end of a response category (Question 3: approximately 15 percent, category: "1 to 19 percent").

Question version 2 used an alternative closed-response format that did not include a "0 percent" category and in which the correct answer was in the middle of an indicated probability range in each case (Question 1: "70 to 89 percent"; Question 2: "30 to 49 percent"; Question 3: "10 to 19 percent").

Findings:

Detailed results on the experimental variation of the response format are presented on pages 12 to 21 in the results report (see downloads).

In summary, respondents generally overestimated the likelihood that a woman aged 40 to 45 would become pregnant after infertility treatments. In addition, it appeared that respondents were strongly oriented toward the answer categories, presumably because they did not know the correct answer. In version 1 with the few response categories, respondents tended to choose the middle categories. Version 2 with the higher number of response categories resulted in a multimodal distribution, and Version 3 had respondents overestimating the probability the most. In addition, respondents differed in whether they thought the probability of a woman aged 40 to 45 becoming pregnant was higher in the general formulation of question 2 or after fertility treatments (question 3). This difference in response behavior could indicate that the knowledge question is too difficult to answer, or that the question has other cognitive hurdles. For example, in

question 3, some respondents might refer to the population of all women aged 40 to 45, while others might refer only to those who did not become pregnant naturally.

Recommendations for Answer Categories:

Although answering the open question (question version 3) was perceived as more difficult than answering the closed question versions, this did not lead to item nonresponse in the cognitive pretest. Since an open question offers more analysis possibilities due to the metric scaling, we recommend asking the questions openly. If other questionnaire-related considerations speak against an open question, we recommend the closed question of version 2, since here the correct answer does not lie at the border between two answer options.

Findings for Question:

Response explanation

Almost 40% of respondents justified their answers by stating that women's fertility decreases with age and thus the probability of success of fertility treatments also decreases:

- *"Women have passed their childbearing peak, fertility is declining. Getting pregnant is no longer so easy. The success rate of fertility treatments also drops dramatically with age."* (TP117, response to version 1: 40 to 59 percent)
- *"The chance of getting pregnant at this age is not very high; depending on your financial means, you may be able to have artificial insemination more often. Nevertheless, the success rate is low."* (TP248, response to version 3: 43 percent)
- *"I think biological age ensures that fertilization is no longer so easy."* (TP439, response to version 2: 20 to 29 percent)

About 30% of the respondents indicated that they thought they were more likely to get pregnant at this age with the help of fertility treatments than to get pregnant naturally:

- *"I chose this answer because the chances of success with the help of certain treatments may well be higher than by natural means. Also because of the age."* (TP215, response to version 2: 60 to 69 percent)
- *"Infertility treatment increases the chance of pregnancy compared to pregnancy by natural means. Nevertheless, many attempts are also accompanied by miscarriages. Hence the choice of 20%."* (TP284, response to version 3: 20%)
- *"I think that through the intervention of others, fertilization is naturally increased."* (TP297, response to version 1: 40 to 59 percent)

Sporadically, respondents argued that the chances of success of infertility treatments were low because they would only be considered if one did not become pregnant naturally. Some respondents based their answers on personal experience:

- *"In most cases, only people for whom the natural way does not work are likely to undergo fertility treatment. In this respect, the success rate should not necessarily be high."* (TP247, response to version 1: 20 to 39 percent)
- *"I know many women for whom infertility treatment has not worked or has only worked after several attempts."* (TP687, response to version 2: 60 to 69 percent)

What do the respondents understand by "infertility treatments"?

After respondents answered question 3, all 240 respondents were asked how they interpreted the term "fertility treatments" in the question. About 40% of the test persons understood fertility treatments to mean "artificial insemination" and about 20% mentioned non-specific medical help for unfulfilled desire to have a child.

- *"That medical means are used to try to induce pregnancy."* (TP143)
- *"The counseling and treatment of someone who wants to have children."* (TP224)

Another 20% of respondents understood this to include hormone treatments (in combination with artificial insemination) and about 7% of respondents mentioned specific artificial insemination procedures:

- *"Artificial hormones and / or artificial insemination"* (TP161).
- *"Treatments by physicians that support the desire to have children, i.e., hormone therapy, artificial insemination, etc."* (TP206)
- *"in vitro fertilization"* (TP121)
- *"IVF, ICSI"* (TP167)
- *"Pregnancy does not occur naturally. This is followed by hormone therapy or artificial insemination (IUI, IVF, or ICSI.)"* (TP248)

Perceived difficulty of questions:

Just under half (n = 37) of the respondents reported that answering question 3 was "somewhat" or "very" difficult for them. There was no difference in perceived difficulty between the three versions of the question (version 1: n = 13, version 2: n = 14, version 3: n = 10).

As with questions 1 and 2, the difficulty of answering was mostly justified by the fact that people had not yet dealt with the topic and that it was therefore difficult to assess the probability of success of fertility treatments:

- *"I am not yet at that age myself and have not yet dealt with it."* (TP165)
- *"I have no medical knowledge and also no private experience."* (TP294)
- *"I don't have much experience or knowledge about this issue."* (TP313)

Sporadically, it was noted that it was difficult to make a judgment for all women in the age group because the likelihood of successful infertility treatment was very individual and depended on several things:

- *"Because all women are different."* (TP145)
- *"Each person and their body is individual. So it's hard to make a statement for everyone in this age spectrum."* (TP245)

Recommendations:

The results of the cognitive pretest show that the subject matter of the questions is complex and not all respondents have the appropriate knowledge to answer the questions. Nevertheless, respondents were able to select (versions 1 and 2) or fill in (version 3) an answer and justify it in a meaningful way. The questions can therefore be left in their current form.