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RESOLVE
Embryo Donation Track
Executive Summary

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RESOLVE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, RESOLVE has developed materials and presentations in order to increase awareness and knowledge of embryo donation as a potential procedure to address issues of infertility. Through this project, RESOLVE is providing information to potential embryo donors and recipients concerning the medical, legal, and mental health aspects of embryo donation.

Project components include educational modules presented in two venues: as sessions at RESOLVE conferences held in fall 2008 and six separate webinars in development in the fall of 2009 and which are to be made available to a wider audience in 2010.

The six webinars are designed to address three main topics separately (medical, legal and mental health), to two different audiences, potential donors and potential recipients. One webinar, addressing medical issues in embryo donation from the perspective of potential recipients, was developed for testing at this stage and presented to a small group recruited for this purpose.

EVALUATION RESEARCH GOALS AND METHODS

RESOLVE contracted with Goodman Research Group, Inc. (GRG) to conduct external formative evaluation research on both project elements (conferences and webinars). For the conferences, GRG conducted a focus group discussion at each conference location following the last track session. GRG also fielded pre-conference and post-conference surveys with the participants who attended at one of the two locations. GRG has delivered two reports to RESOLVE on the results of the conference evaluation.

For the webinar, GRG fielded a survey with all eight participants and conducted interviews with all but one of the attendees in the weeks following the webinar.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants' Backgrounds and Experiences:

- Participants fell between 35 and 50 in age and varied somewhat in educational background.
- Three of the eight participants had children and all had pursued fertility treatments at some point.
- Most identified themselves as potential recipients and some indicated other more specific goals related to the topic.

Technical Aspects of the Webinar:

- Overall, the webinar was successful technically, with no problems reported that were associated with the platform itself.
- The participants positively noted the use of polling during the webinar.

Presentation and Resources:

- Responses rating the webinar presentation and its content showed a range and were also fairly high.
- Responses to the visual aspects of the webinar were more mixed.
- At the same time, regarding visual elements, participants indicated that any neutral or negative reactions did not notably affect their interest in the webinar or its impact on them.

Expectations for the Webinar Were Largely Met:

- Most of the participants gained what they had hoped to gain from the webinar.
- Their expectations were met in particular in the areas of learning new information about embryo donation in general and learning about resources that they could consult in the future.

Knowledge and Learning from the Webinar Increased:

- According to several measures, participants indicated that they increased in their knowledge about embryo donation as a result of the webinar.
- There was less gain in two content areas, where knowledge was already relatively high (knowledge about embryo and post-embryo transfer procedures).
- Responses also suggest that there may have been somewhat limited gain in an area where knowledge was not quite as high: embryo transfer risks.

Varying Attitudes Toward Embryo Donation Pre- and Post-Webinar:

- Both before and after the webinar, participant inclination toward embryo donation covered a full range.
- The webinar did not appear to have impacted inclination toward the procedure for most of the participants.
- Those who were more inclined toward the procedure after the webinar also were more likely to indicate they found it more relevant for their path.

The Webinar Provided “Basic” Information:

- Participants indicated that they found the webinar provided “basic” information.
- While some expressed disappointment in the limitations of the webinar in this respect, most expressed the understanding that this was appropriate for a broad audience seeking an introduction to the topic.

Participants Identified Perceived Challenges in Embryo Donation:

- The challenges identified by participants following the webinar were similar to those identified by those who attended the conference workshops held by RESOLVE on embryo donation.
- These challenges include concerns about biological siblings, genetic connections in resolving infertility, and costs of procedures.

Based on the findings from the webinar evaluation, GRG makes the following recommendations:

- Continue to provide the opportunity for question-and-answer around the webinar, whether at the time of participation or afterwards.
- Consider including links to resources that address other participant interests, even if they are not topics covered by the webinar itself.
- Indicate to the potential participants that the webinar is an introduction to the topic, for those who are in the early stage in their learning about embryo donation.
- Consider reviewing some of the visual materials in light of comments that suggested some difficulties with some images, and given that most participants did not consider them essential.
- Consider adding elements to the presentation that reflect individual, personal journeys by donors and recipients who participated in the embryo donation process.
- Consider following up with participants who view the webinar(s) at a later time, to discover if additional time to process what they experienced during the webinar influences their reactions to embryo donation as an option for resolving infertility issues.

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