The role of the psychologist in reproductive medicine

Description

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Description The field of reproductive medicine has grown in size and complexity over the past three decades. Psychologists have played a significant role in this expansion, not only as infertility counselors, but also as consultants, researchers, and psychological examiners. Given the rapid increase in technology, as well as societal trends involving different ways of building families, the field is likely to continue to grow very quickly, and psychologists’ roles in the field may become increasingly important. Few research studies have been conducted on psychologists’ experiences in the field of reproductive medicine. In the context of the changing landscape of reproductive medicine and the growing integration of medicine and psychology, this qualitative study aimed to explore the distinct experiences and unique roles of the psychologist in reproductive medicine. Twelve semi-structured interviews were completed with licensed psychologists specializing in reproductive medicine. Research questions explored psychologists’ daily activities and their experiences of their roles, including professional challenges, rewards, and the experience of interdisciplinary work. Psychologists were asked to discuss their training, whether there were differences between their practice and training, and if so, how they reconciled those differences. The researcher also sought to understand psychologists’ conceptualization of the relationship between psychology and reproductive medicine, what psychologists feel others should know about their roles, and how their skills may be best utilized. The interview data collected were analyzed to uncover qualitative themes. Overall, participants believed that their comprehensive training in scientific research, theory, and practice made them especially suitable for work in reproductive medicine. Training in psychological testing was brought up as a distinct and important contribution. Psychologists saw their contributions as valuable not only to patient care, but to the efficiency and well-being of reproductive medicine practices. Obstacles included their experience of their roles as underutilized and undervalued and the challenges of working within a managed care health system. In sum, psychologists’ roles in reproductive medicine are distinct, valuable, and necessary for the evaluation and treatment of infertility patients and third-party candidates. Implications for reproductive medicine professionals and psychologists are discussed, both in terms of research and practice.

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Psychologists’ work in this area involves an abundance of roles, clients and different settings. By Lindsay Childress-Beatty, JD, PhD. 2009, Vol 40, No. 2. Print version: page 66. An enjoyable aspect of my job is that I am able to learn in more depth about the various ethical issues facing psychologists in the course of their daily work. In November, I had the pleasure of attending the American Society for Reproductive Medicine’s 64th Annual Meeting in San Francisco: “Bridge to the Future of Reproductive Medicine.” I was struck by the wide range of health and mental health professionals who were members of an association “devoted to advancing knowledge and expertise in reproductive medicine, including infertility, menopause, contraception and sexuality.” Psychology is important to medicine because mood affects biology and vice versa. In particular, patients undergoing difficult treatment or ailments are vulnerable to things like depression. The depression can then actually make an illness worse or slow down recovery time. Employing techniques such as CBT or mindfulness meditation can help stop this. 77 Views. Related Questions. What are the importance of psychology to medicine? How does Psychology relate to medicine? What is the role of research in medicine? Terminal Illness and Hastened Death Requests: The Important Role of the Mental Health Professional. Farberman, Rhea K. (1997-12). The Role of the Mental Health Professional in Helping Significant Others of Persons Who Are Assisted in Death. Werth, James L. (1999-04). The Role of the Mental Health Professional in Helping Significant Others of Persons Who Are Assisted in Death. Werth, James L., Jr. (1999-04).