PREGNANCY INTENTION AMONG WOMEN WITH CYSTIC FIBROSIS: A THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR MODEL

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ABSTRACT

Cystic fibrosis (CF) is an autosomal genetically inherited disease; it is the most common genetic disorder among Caucasians. CF affects several body systems and is a life-shortening disease that requires extensive treatment regimens and numerous medications. CF was once considered a "pediatric disease" because patients rarely lived into adulthood. However, with the advent of new therapies and medications, people with CF are surviving well into middle adulthood and beyond. Recent advances have resulted in the first-ever medication that actually treats one of the genetic mutations. However, there is no definitive cure for CF.

Among women with CF, the issue of family planning and sexual reproduction is becoming a more salient issue. More pregnancies occur among women with CF each year, but there is a dearth of information regarding pregnancy among women with CF. This study sought to explore pregnancy intention among adult women with CF in the United States. Using the Theory of Planned Behavior, a survey was administered and 103 responses analyzed, to explore which factors were pertinent in predicting pregnancy intention.

Nearly half of the respondents reported intending a pregnancy at any time in the future. Unemployed women with CF were less likely to intend a pregnancy, whereas women with more positive attitudes towards pregnancy were more likely to intend a pregnancy. Several beliefs were statistically significant in contributing to the formation of attitudes and one's mother and friends were identified as pertinent social referents for pregnancy intention. Perceived behavioral control did not significantly contribute to any of the models. Implications for policy and practice are discussed.