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The Impact of Patient Age on Patient-Centered Care (PCC) Priorities: A Survey of 1500 Infertility Patients Across the US

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#P-433

PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

- The lack of PCC is a major contributor to patient distress which can contribute to treatment termination¹
- Good clinician-patient communication, caring relationships, and understanding of the psychological needs of patients are crucial factors influencing PCC¹
- However, there's insufficient evidence to comprehend PCC needs from the patient's perspective in the US and the different factors influencing these needs, such as age, race, and geographical location
- Furthermore, no studies in the US have assessed PCC from the perspective of an infertility patient
- The objective of this study was to determine the aspects of PCC that are prioritized in terms of importance by infertility patients and whether these priorities vary by age groups

MATERIAL & METHODS

- An electronic survey was completed by infertility patients within an IVF network in the US between September 2023 and January 2024
- Infertility patients who had attended a new patient consult in any participating fertility clinics were eligible to participate in the survey
- Respondents ranked the top attributes within four categories: Fertility clinic & procedures, Physician, Clinic staff members, and Financial process – (1, most important; 5, least important)
- Differences in attributes from each category were ranked the most and slightly important between various age groups of infertility patients were evaluated using chi-square statistics

RESULTS

- Respondents were categorized into the following age groups: ≤30 years, n=203; 31-35 years, n=544; 36-40 years, n=514; and ≥41 years, n=239
- Baseline demographic characteristics of participating patients are summarized in **Table 1**. The majority were white, female, from the Southern part of USA, and identified as straight

Table 1: Baseline demographic characteristics of participating patients

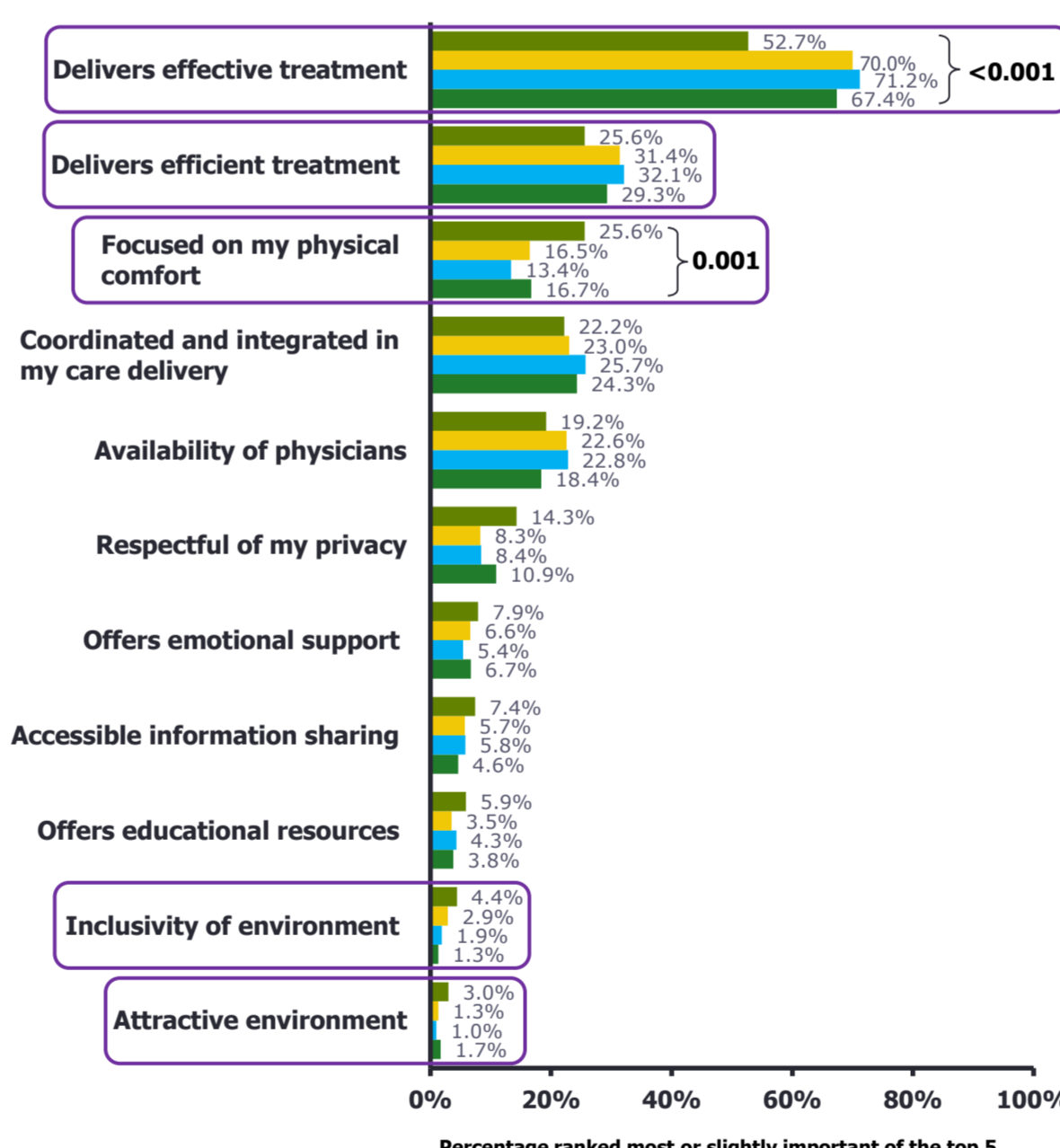
Parameter n (%)	≤30 years N=203	31-35 years N=544	36-40 years N=514	>40 years N=239
Race/Ethnicity				
Asian	13 (6.4)	52 (9.6)	57 (11.1)	32 (13.4)
Black or African American	14 (6.9)	37 (6.8)	52 (10.1)	61 (25.5)
Hispanic or Latino	38 (18.7)	96 (17.6)	99 (19.3)	36 (15.1)
White or Caucasian	134 (66.0)	338 (62.1)	279 (54.3)	101 (42.3)
Other	4 (2.0)	21 (3.9)	27 (5.3)	9 (3.8)
Identifying Gender				
Female	193 (95.1)	517 (95.0)	489 (95.1)	214 (89.5)
Sexual Orientation				
Straight	173 (85.2)	484 (89.0)	455 (88.5)	215 (90.0)
Other	24 (11.8)	44 (8.1)	37 (7.2)	12 (5.0)
Geographic Location				
Midwest	19 (9.4)	61 (11.2)	34 (6.6)	23 (9.6)
Northeast	27 (13.3)	85 (15.6)	96 (18.7)	29 (12.1)
South	153 (75.4)	386 (71.0)	376 (73.2)	179 (74.9)
West	4 (2.0)	12 (2.2)	8 (1.6)	8 (3.3)

IMPACT STATEMENT

This study is the first to evaluate the PCC priorities of infertility patients in the US across different age groups, highlighting the crucial need to understand the unique perspectives of younger patients (≤30 years) and future entrants seeking care. By identifying what these patients perceive as meaningful, this research aims to enhance PCC practices, ultimately improving care outcomes for diverse patient populations

- ### Fertility clinic and procedures
- Although "Delivers effective treatment" and "Delivers efficient treatment" were the most selected by all patients, how often such attributes were selected varied among age groups (**Figure 1**)
 - Respondents in the age group ≤30 years selected "Delivers effective treatment" less often than older groups (p<.001 across groups) but "Focused on my physical comfort" more often than older groups (p=.001 across groups) (**Figure 1**)
 - "Attractive environment" and "Inclusivity of environment" were rarely selected as an important attribute by all age groups of patients (**Figure 1**)

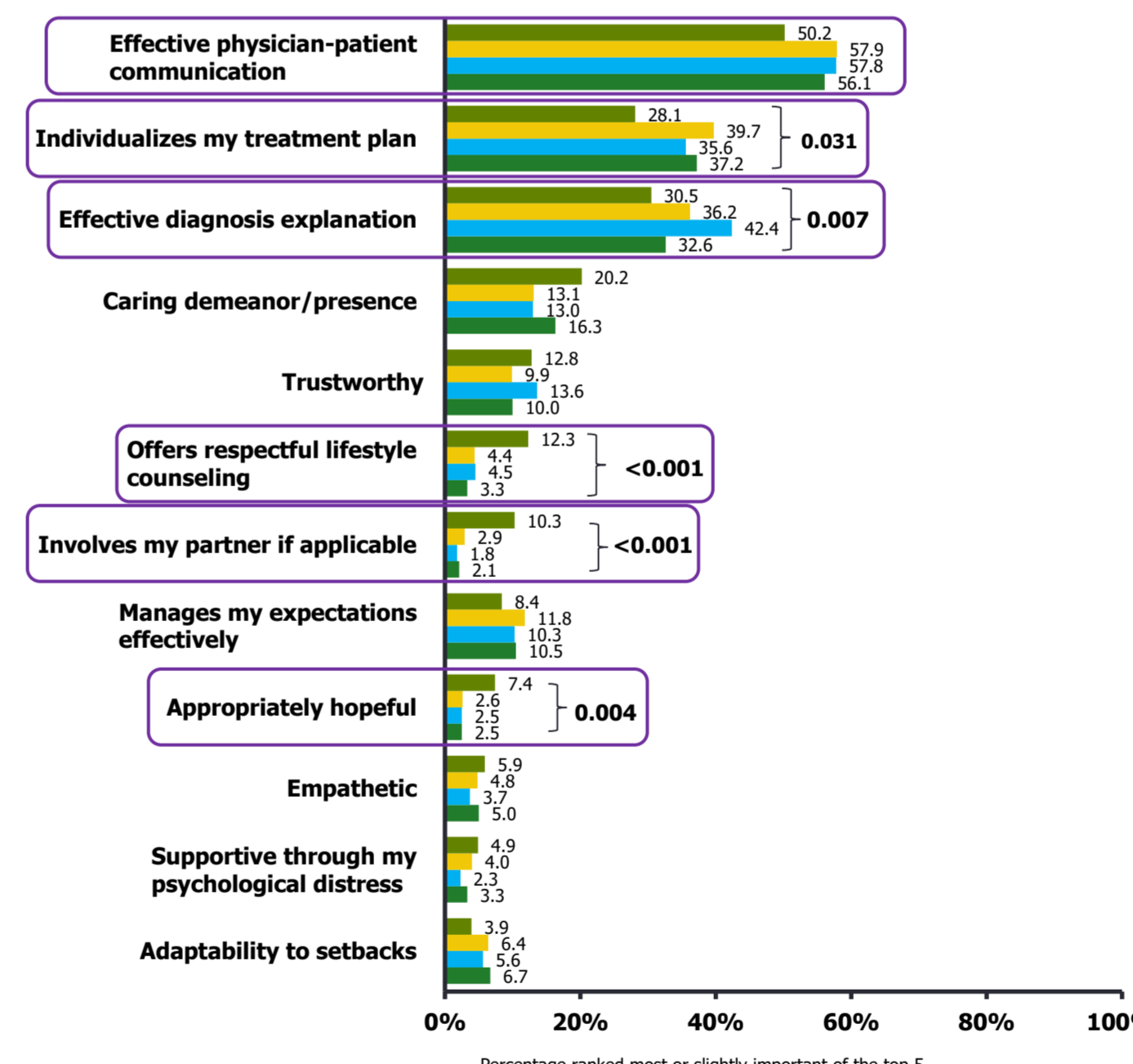
Figure 1: Frequency of an attribute of Fertility clinics and procedures was ranked as most or slightly important of the top 5, by age group.



RESULTS

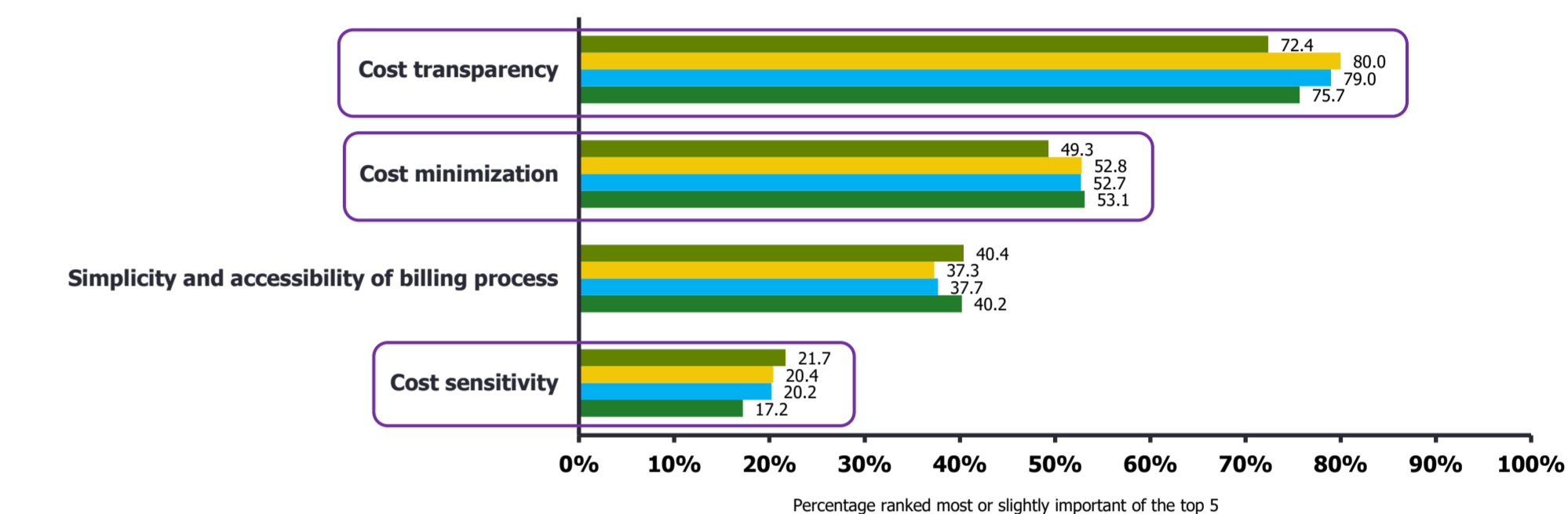
- ### Physicians
- "Effective physician-patient communication" was the most important attribute for all ages (**Figure 2**)
 - Figure 2** indicates that "Effective diagnosis explanation" was selected as the second most important attribute by ≤30 years and 36-40 years (p=0.0071 across groups) and "Individualize treatment plan" as the second most important attribute for 31-35 years and ≥41 years age group
 - For patients <30 years age group, "Offers respectful lifestyle counseling" (p<0.001), "Involves my partner if applicable" (p=0.004) are more often ranked as most or slightly important attributes than other age groups (**Figure 2**)

Figure 2: Frequency of an attribute of Physicians was ranked as most or slightly important of the top 5, by age group



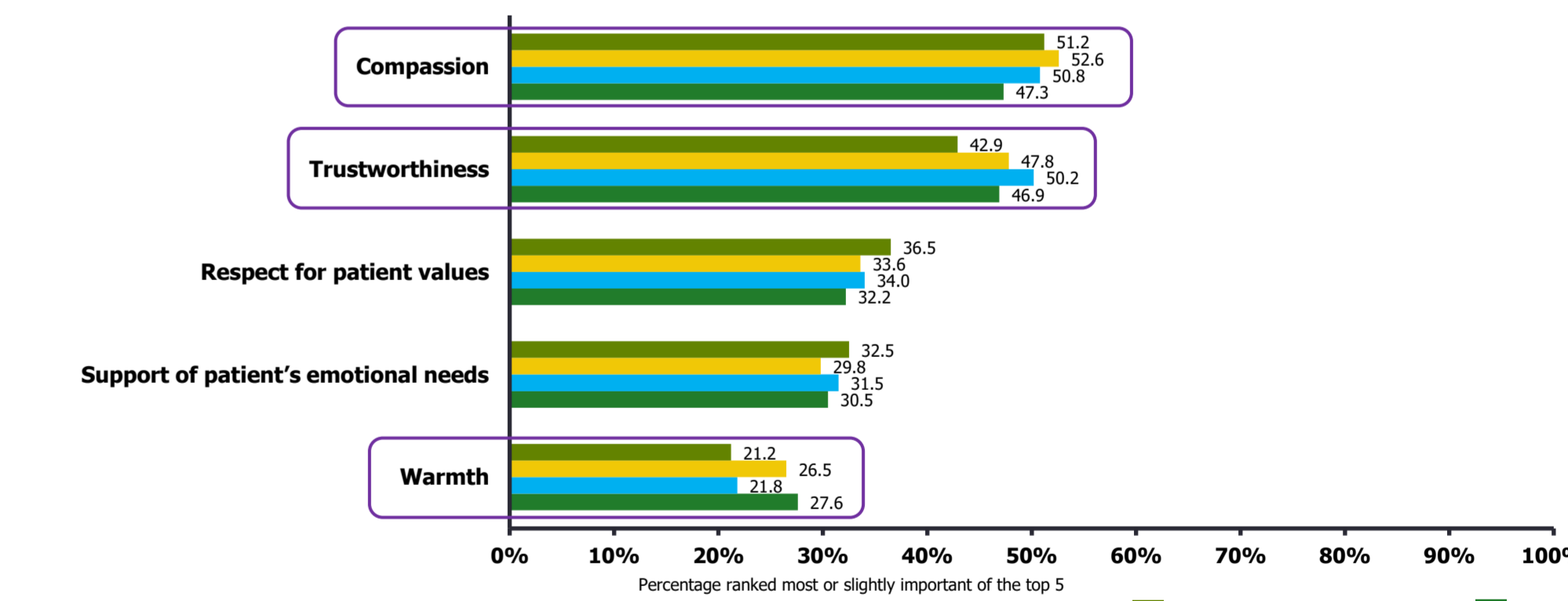
- ### Financial process
- Figure 3** indicates that "Cost transparency" and "Cost minimization" were the most frequently selected attributes by all age groups
 - All age groups of participating patients least frequently selected "Cost sensitivity" (**Figure 3**)

Figure 3: Frequency of an attribute of Financial processes was ranked as most or slightly important of the top 5, by age group



- ### Clinic staff members
- Figure 4** indicates that "Compassion" and "Trustworthiness" were most frequently selected for Clinic Staff by all age groups
 - All age groups of patients least frequently selected "Warmth" as the most or slightly important attribute (**Figure 4**)

Figure 4: Frequency of an attribute of Clinic staff members was ranked as most or slightly important of the top 5, by age group



CONCLUSIONS

- Patients across all ages prioritize effective/efficient treatment, effective physician-patient communication, compassionate/trustworthy clinic staff members, and transparent financial process as the most important PCC attributes
- There are variations in the importance of attributes within Fertility clinics and procedures as well as Physician categories across different age groups of patients
- Patients ≤30 years emphasized their physical comfort more frequently than other age groups, who prioritized "Delivers effective treatment" and "Delivers efficient treatment" in Fertility Clinics and procedures category
- Patients ≤30 years prioritized "Offers respectful lifestyle counseling," "Involves my partner if applicable", and "Appropriately hopeful" among other attributes in the Physician category than other older patients

REFERENCES

1. Borghi, L., Menichetti, J., and Vegni, E. (2021). Editorial: patient-centered infertility care: current research and future perspectives on psychosocial, relational, and communication aspects. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 712485. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.712485>

ABBREVIATIONS
PCC, Patient-Centered Care; REI, Reproductive Endocrinologists and Infertility; US, United States

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DISCLOSURES
Allison Catherino and Kelly Wirka are employees of EMD Serono, Rockland, MA, USA. Kathleen Deering and Victoria Kulbokas are employees of EPI-Q, Inc which received funding from EMD Serono to analyze the data. Alice Domar and Amber Mendoza do not have anything to disclose.

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