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Lived experiences of women with primary infertility in rural Limpopo province, South Africa

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Statement of the Problem: Women who had never achieved pregnancy after adequate exposure to unprotected sex without using contraceptives tend to suffer primary infertility. It is a global reproductive health issue that affects individuals and couples. Male infertility which is rarely acknowledged worldwide including rural communities contributes to more than half of all cases for women with primary infertility. Among other factors contributing to primary infertility is sexually transmitted infections. The nature of research was alarmed with the experiences of women with primary infertility with a purpose of describing and exploring lived experiences of women with primary infertility. The study adopted a qualitative, and phenomenological approach using explorative design. The population was all women with primary infertility. Non-probability purposive convenient sampling was employed to select the participants aged 25 - 45 years attending infertility clinic based on the personal judgment of the researchers. Data was collected through in-depth one to one interview and guided by one central question namely: *"Could you please explain to me how it is to be without a child of your own"*. Field notes were taken as the researcher met face to face with participants. Data was analyzed using Tesch eight steps of data analysis. Measures of trustworthiness were adhered to and ethical principle considered. Two main themes emerged: Spouses/ husbands not ready to test for infertility and lack of consistent consultations at fertility clinics. Conclusion and recommendations Government and policy makers to train more health professionals specializing in fertility to enhance quality care and provide human and material resources in all public health facilities providing fertility services. Participants to seek medical intervention immediately after 12 months of unsuccessful pregnancy and disclose their infertility status to lessen self-discrimination.