

## **Socio-demographic characteristics of couples who deliberately ends fertility treatment in Denmark without having conceived.**

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Studies on fertility in blended families and the impact of ‘yours, mine and our’ children on fertility have focused on various hypotheses regarding the wish for and the meaning of having a joint child (Thomson 1997), pointing at the complexity of fertility decisions and that relations between and roles of the man and the woman in a couple may differ.

The research presented here is part of an ongoing project on “*Family histories and establishing of daily life after fertility treatment*”, including couples, who initiated a new period of fertility treatment at a public clinic in Denmark (covering 63 pct. of all registered treatments) during 2000-2001: The COMPI-cohort (<http://www.compipro.dk/>). The access to fertility treatment has been regulated by law since 1997, specifying that the treatment could be offered to *couples*, consisting of a man and a woman.

Both partners, individually, were interviewed at the initiation of treatment and after 1 and 5 years, irrespectively whether they were still undergoing treatment. In total 568 couples, who had no child at the initiation of the treatment have completed all three questionnaires.

We study whether couples, who *deliberately* end further treatment even though they are still childless differ from other couples in the COMPI-cohort, as regards socio-demographic characteristics, infertility related stress and previous family histories. At a further step, it will be studied whether there is a medical or treatment-specific condition having a specific impact on the choice to end the treatment, and if so, if the couple subsequently turn to ‘low—technological’ treatment (insemination) instead and with what result.

The various data on the partner’s relation and experience of stress facilitate analyses of the relative weight of the transition into joint parenthood by having a joint child compared to continuing as a couple without children. Moreover, whether having a child from a previous relation makes the couple more opt to choose to end the treatment. Ongoing studies by other members of the COMPI-group study these couples’ reasons for ending treatment, but none of these include information on the kind of family, the couples establish subsequently and whether they include children.

### **References:**

Thomson E (1997). Her, His and Their Children: Influences on Couple Childbearing Decisions. *National Survey of Families and Households Working Paper #76*, Center for Demography and Ecology, Univ of Wisconsin-Madison.