Women's experiences of living with involuntary childlessness in Uganda: a qualitative phenomenological study

Involuntary childlessness is a global phenomenon that negatively impacts the couple, or the family involved. The experiences of women living with involuntary childlessness have not been well documented in the literature, specifically in the Ugandan context. The purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of women living with involuntary childlessness in Uganda.

A qualitative phenomenological approach was used. Fifteen in-depth interviews were conducted among women experiencing involuntary childlessness attending a National Referral Hospital. Purposive sampling was used, and data saturation determined the actual sample size.

Thematic analysis was used for data analysis. The results were presented in the form of text and narrative quotes from participants. Six themes emerged inadequate social support, psychological torture, continued grief, marital instability, failure attributed to childlessness and financial constraints. Inadequate social support was in the form of having an unsupportive partner, and altered social status, while women experienced emotional abuse, stigma, and blame under the psychological torture. Women experienced feelings of distress and grief. Women with involuntary childlessness recounted experiencing unstable marriages characterized by infidelity, divorce, abandonment, and polygamous marriages. Some women coped positively, while others employed negative coping strategies such as social withdrawal and isolation. Women who their partners supported coped positively. Those who did not receive as much support were stressed, sad, angry, and had lost hope of pregnancy.

In this study, women with involuntary childlessness lacked social support amidst experiences of marital turmoil, psychological torture, unfulfilled motherhood expectations, and financial constraints while seeking treatment, therefore, there is a need to screen the women for psychological / mental illness symptoms and provide empathetic care and counseling. The prevalence of involuntary childlessness is not well documented in Uganda and a study can be done to determine its extent.

Biography



Susan is a skilled midwife and women's health expert with 12+ years of clinical practice and 6+ years of university teaching. Her passion lies in providing exceptional care to women at every stage of life and shaping the next generation of nurses. She is driven by a desire to mentor and make a positive impact on young lives