Women’s views on fertility and conception in five countries

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Introduction
Demographic trends, such as later motherhood and reduced family size, indicate that the ways women consider fertility and becoming pregnant may also be changing. This study sought to understand women’s views on fertility and conception in five divergent countries.

Study Design and Methods
During 2011, in-depth, one to one interviews were conducted by TNS* with 120 women from five countries: Russia, Brazil, USA, Brazil and Italy. In total, 24 interviews were conducted per country. Trained interviewers performed 60 minute interviews with individual women following a pre-set discussion plan. The questions were designed to understand women’s attitudes towards fertility and conception in order to obtain qualitative data from each country. Women were recruited via local agencies with representation from the following groups of women; qualitative data from each country.

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Results
For women in all countries, having a child is seen as the essence of who they are and it means to be a woman. The themes identified by interview are described below:

There are some cultural differences affecting the strength and realization of the plan of having children.

The central motivations for deciding to start a family are:
- Strengthening their femininity and self-confidence
- Experience the unique feeling of deep love
- Develop the family closeness from generation to generation
- Balance within their life
- Develop the family closeness from generation to generation
- Be a mother
- Develop the family closeness from generation to generation
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The path to achieve a pregnancy was similar between countries, where 4 distinct stages could be identified (though not all women progressed through all stages). However, women in Germany and the US transitioned quickly to the next stage. Women in Germany and the US often carefully plan pregnancy to suit their life plans. However, in Brazil, Italy and to some extent Russia, having a child is seen as something that is not actively planned and these countries also have very low awareness of methods to assist with conception.

Experience based information sources
- HCP (Doctors, Pharmacist)
- Internet
- Magazines/Books
- TV Documentaries (less often)
- Friends (less often)

Factual based information sources
- Menstruation
- Birth Control
- Contraception

Mostly preferred by women who think that pregnancy will occur easily

Mostly preferred by women who think that they may have problems achieving pregnancy

The baseline knowledge of women regarding fertility and conception differed considerably between countries, and mirrored attitudes towards achieving pregnancy. That is, women who wished to plan their pregnancy were generally more knowledgeable than those who were content to “let nature happen naturally”. German women, followed by US women are seen as the details of female fertility, but in other countries knowledge is poor and information is only sought if there are problems concerning, with conception follows convention, especially in Russia.

Conclusions
Having a child is considered a central life event of a woman in these five countries, however, their path to achieving pregnancy is very different and very individual. Women in Germany and the US have higher awareness of female fertility and tend to actively plan pregnancy, whereas in the other countries knowledge is lacking and conception is viewed as a natural event only, requiring medical advice if infertility is suspected.

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