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Hadley, Robin  (2023) Men and the desire for fatherhood: the effects of male broodiness on involuntarily childless men. In: 5th International Conference on Psychology, Counselling and Education 2023, 31 August 2023 - 1 September 2023, Cebu City, Philippines. (Unpublished)

**Version:** Presentation

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**Additional Information:** Slides of a presentation given at: 5th International Conference on Psychology, Counselling and Education 2023

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*Men and the Desire for Fatherhood:  
the effects of male broodiness on involuntarily  
childless men.*

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ICPCE Conference, Cebu City, Philippines, 2023

#ICPCE2023



# Background

1. Declining fertility rate: average of 5 children per mother in 1965 to below 2.5 in 2015.
2. Most studies on reproductive experience, ideation and outcomes focus on women and couples.
3. Much less data on men's experience, ideation and outcomes.
4. Men viewed as 'not interested' and 'disengaged' from reproductive experience, ideation and outcomes.
5. Common myths: men are fully fertile from puberty until death.
6. Women are broody and men are not.



# Study aim & research questions

- The aim of this study was to evaluate the level of the desire for parenthood (broodiness) in childless men compared to childless women non-parents and parents.
1. How widespread is male broodiness in childless men?
  2. What is the incidence of male broodiness compared to female broodiness?
  3. What factors influence the decision to parent?
  4. Is there a difference between non-parents & parents?
  5. What are the reactions associated with broodiness?



# Method

1. A sequential exploratory **mixed-methods** quantitative-qualitative online **survey including** open questions.
2. **Survey built and hosted on** Select Survey ASP.
3. **Quantitative data** analysed with SPSS.
4. **Qualitative data analysed using** Latent Thematic Analysis.
5. **Recruitment was by the** snowball email **method**.
6. **Inclusion criteria:** UK adults **aged** >16 years.
7. **The study was approved by the** University of Manchester **ethical committee**.



# Sample

1. The sample was formed of 232 respondents:
2. Composed of 167 females and 65 males.
3. The majority were White British, degree educated, professional, and heterosexual.
4. Mean age of 41.37 years (SD = 10.83); median central tendency age of 40 years - range of 45 years.



# Results

1. More childless men (51.9%) indicated a desire for parenthood compared to 25.9% who did not.
2. Female & male non-parents showed a similar level of desire for parenthood: (Mdn= 1.00 [Yes]),  $U= 995.000$ ,  $z=-.688$ ,  $p=.492$  and  $r=-0.06$ .
3. Female & male parents had an equal desire not to repeat parenthood.



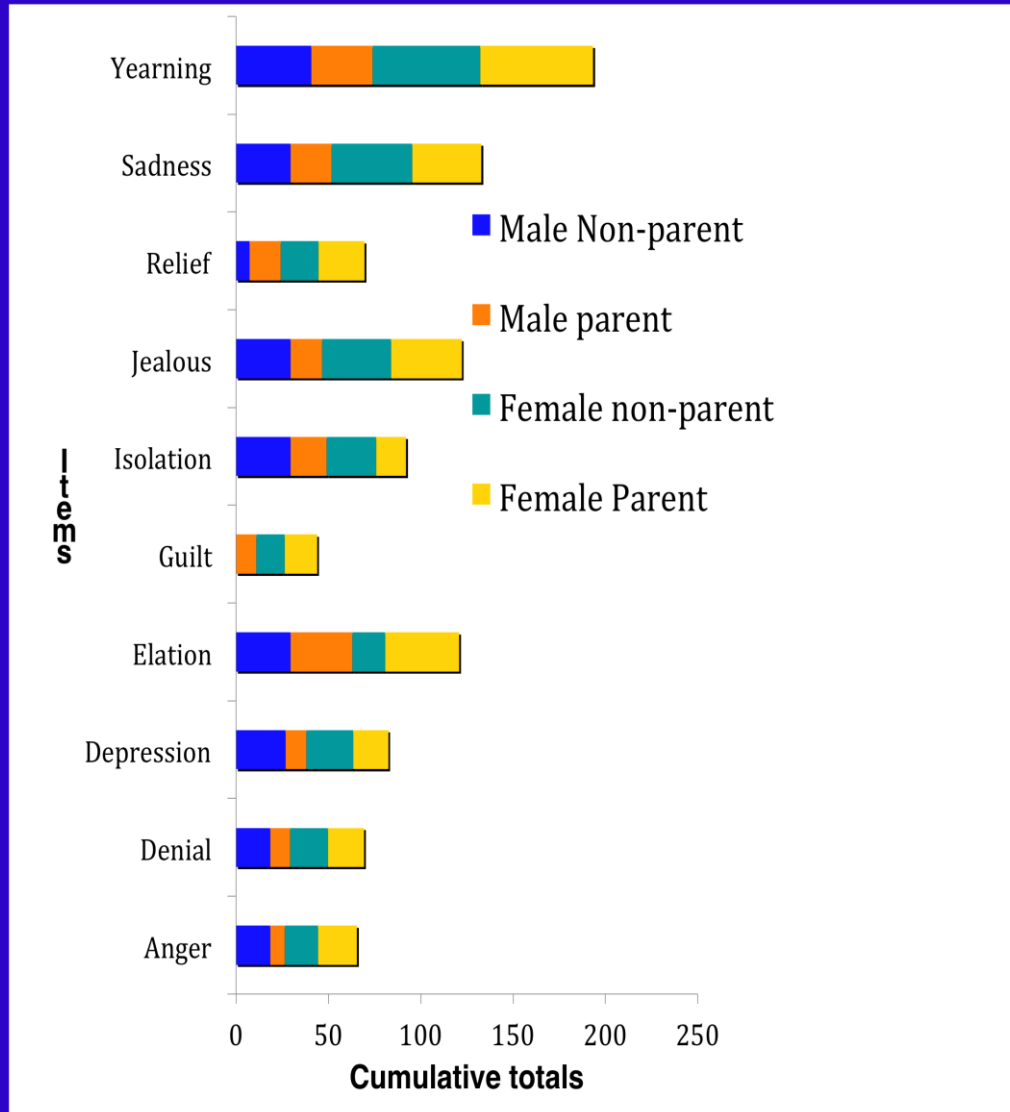
# Main factors in non-parent's reproduction intentions

1. Non-parents indicated *family expectations & cultural/societal expectations* as highest influences
2. Females reported *personal desire & biological urge* as the next major influence.
3. Males indicated *Religious belief & cultural/societal expectation* as the next major influence
4. Males indicated an underlying trend of *personal desire & biological urge*.





# Reactions to broodiness question



# Qualitative analysis

1. Common to non-parents and parents were themes around age, health and relationships.
2. A theme of 'motivation': highlighted parent's unwillingness to repeat parenthood.
3. 'Motivation' for non-parent's : 'desire' and 'future plans'.

“What kept me from being a parent was not having the right ‘constellation’ of circumstances at ‘fertile time’.

Most important was a stable loving relationship, divorce at peak time fertility wise, stable financial circumstances and good environment. Prior to my 30's I did not feel psychology re



# Conclusions

- The results from this study showed that men are interested and affected by 'broodiness' – the desire for parenthood.
- Childless men reported *higher levels of depression and isolation.*



# Thank you!

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Full paper:



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31<sup>ST</sup> August 2023

