

Addressing key missing variables in reproductive health studies in familial Mediterranean fever

Sirs,

I read with great interest the article by Sotskiy *et al.* (1), which addresses the vital issue of reproductive disorders in patients with familial Mediterranean fever (FMF). The authors have highlighted a clinically significant issue, especially given FMF autoimmune and autoinflammatory nature. While numerous studies have focused on clinical and laboratory outcomes in patients with FMF (2, 3), this article attempts to explore the disease's reproductive implications.

However, fertility-related factors such as age, BMI, and lifestyle are crucial elements in any reproductive health study. Even a simple ChatGPT search on fertility factors usually highlights age, BMI, lifestyle, and hormonal factors as the main contributors to reproductive success. However, in this study by Sotskiy *et al.* three critical factors (BMI, hormonal factors, and lifestyle) were not reported.

There is also a statistically significant difference in age between the three groups analysed. Given that age is one of the most important determinants of fertility, the observed age differences raise concerns about the validity of comparing reproductive outcomes between these groups. Ideally, in a study focusing on fertility, age matching between groups should be a priority to ensure that any differences in reproductive outcomes can be confidently attributed to FMF and not confounded with age.

It would also have been helpful to assess the impact of other variables, such as obesity, which has been shown to affect reproductive outcomes (4-6) significantly. Addressing these factors would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how FMF affects fertility, independent of other well-known contributing factors. Meanwhile, there was no evaluation between the groups in terms of antiphospholipid, another rheumatologic disease, which is one of the most common causes of infertility (7). Some issues need to be addressed in many studies conducted in FMF (8-12).

Despite these limitations, the authors should

be commended for highlighting this critical issue. This study opens avenues for further research to address knowledge gaps and provide a better understanding of how it affects reproductive health. Science will advance through such discussions and ongoing research.

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