Marriage and Family

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**Introduction**

 Recently, a US news agency “TIME” published an article entitled “The Silent Shame of Male Infertility” (TIME, 2019). The respective article described infertility and its causes, particularly in men. It pressed on the issue as to why infertility cannot be associated only with women when their male counterparts can experience the same disease. It featured the current situation of Mr. Bradley Goldman who is suffering from the anxiety of not conceiving children. This is due to infertility caused by the steroids he had been taking for a long time. The issue of infertility among married couples in the USA is thoroughly addressed in the chapter, “Becoming a Parent” in the book related to marriage and family class (Lauer & Lauer, 2019).

**Discussion**

 Every married couple has a different opinion regarding becoming a parent. Some couples don’t want to have children due to their personal preferences towards a career, more focus on the marital relationship or having doubts about being a good parent (Lauer & Lauer, 2019). On the other side of the picture, there are numerous American couples want to have few or more children. Mr. and Mrs. Bradley Goldman is one of those couples as well who wants to reproduce and raise children (TIME, 2019) naturally. However, the quest for a muscular body through steroids resulted in an opportunity cost of ending up with the extinction of testosterone in Mr. Goldman.

The article described that at first, like every grown-up adult, he was more ambitious to build-up a perfect muscular body. The pursuit towards that aim leads him to the use of steroids, a decision he very much regrets now. Mr. & Mrs. Goldman now wants to have children of their own, but Mr. Goldman's low sperm count and the inability to produce testosterone naturally has to lead the couple to live without children so far. According to Lauer & Lauer (2019), this vital issue is known as "involuntary childlessness" where the married couple faces a daunting time in which they live without having natural reproduction. Although the married couple makes an outcry to have their children like Mr. & Mrs. Goldman, sometimes the mistakes of the past become the regret of the future.

Such a couple in which one or both the partners experience infertility does find it very hard to face the societal pressure. The family of Mr. Goldman is going through that same pressure situation where they can’t meet their near relatives or general public openly. They can expect people to ask them “how many children do you have?” as Mr. Goldman has been married for some time now. This question the unfortunate victim of infertility in depression and anxiety. Therefore, it is not just the lack of reproductive abilities that is the current physical disease in Mr. Goldman. This biological disability which is the core characteristic of the male gender has seeped in the mental disorders as well in the cognition of Mr. Goldman.

It was an absolute surprise and shock for Mr. Goldsmith when he found out that his sperm-count was "flat zero" (TIME, 2019). Lauer & Lauer (2019) has also mentioned this in their book that coping with infertility may come as a surprise for some couples. When Mr. Goldsmith started to opt for fertility medications, his sperm count although gradually started to increase but he longer has that pleasant sex drive that a married man should be having for his female counterpart. The last nail in the coffin was the appearance of fat tissues overtaking his muscular body. All the efforts he did along with the help of steroids went in vain. Not only he lost his manhood but also ended up being fat which describes how much useless those steroids have been to him.

In the spotlight of the recovery options stated by Lauer & Lauer (2019) for the infertile couples, Mr. Goldsmith should work on to continue with his fertility medications to develop testosterone within him. However, this treatment will come at the expense of his muscular body. He may eventually reach to normal sperm count after successful medical treatment but may increase in weight and be out of shape. Another option for Mr. & Mrs. Goldman can be the adoption of children (Lauer & Lauer, 2019). They may achieve temporary satisfaction through the feeling of having a child. However, this may not be the permanent solution to the problem. Sexual intimacy is the key to a successful marriage, and thus when the particular couple does not indulge in any such marital activity, the relationship will eventually end up in separation or divorce. The adopted children will also be negatively affected as an aftermath.

**Conclusion**

In the US, muscular men are considered a symbol of independence and capability (TIME, 2019). However, the story of Mr. Goldman suggests that this is not always the case. He built-up his muscular body and thus followed the stereotypes American society holds regarding men. However, he now realizes that he is a living example for every stereotypical male who thinks masculinity lies in muscles. In actual, manhood lies in the ability to reproduce and satisfy the marriage partners through sexual intercourse. This is the basic foundation of masculinity. Becoming a parent of a child is real masculinity. American society needs to promote these realities mentioned above so that the men recognize what should be the top priority for them – muscles or high levels of testosterone.

**References**

Lauer, R. and Lauer, J. (2019). Marriage and Family: The Quest for Intimacy – 9th Edition. *McGraw-Hill Education*.

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