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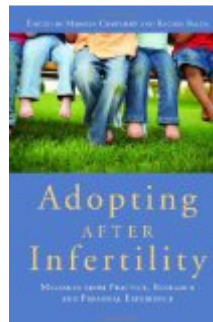
15 November 2010

By *Berenice Golding*

PhD student in social work.
Her research focuses on
egg sharing from the
perspective of the egg
share donor

Appeared in BioNews [584](#)

***Adopting
After
Infertility:
Messages
from
Practice,
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and
Personal
Experience***



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This book is a must-read for those with an academic, professional and personal interest in the topic of adoption and assisted reproduction. It provides an accessible, insightful - and at times emotive account - of what it means to be infertile, how the adoption process works, and what it is like to be an adoptive parent. Some of the interdisciplinary, theoretical perspectives, and the psychological and social difficulties that must be negotiated by those seeking to adopt are covered. The chapters can be read in succession or individually, dependent upon the reader's interests.

The chapters include research from the United Kingdom (UK), Denmark and Germany. Common to

the chapters are the issues those diagnosed with infertility have to navigate. The inclusion of international perspectives further highlights the issues infertile couples face here in the UK and abroad when they decide to adopt. Additionally, including personal accounts about the process of becoming an adoptive parent demonstrates what it means to parent in the absence of a genetic link to one's children.

One of the best things about this book is it covers many aspects of the journey from infertility to adoption in a single volume. Thus, I believe it can act as a useful starting point for research into infertility and the adoption process. Accounts of the impact of infertility locate the issue within the wider context of access to assisted reproduction treatments (ARTs) in the UK and Europe.

The account provided by Professor Gayle Letherby demonstrates the multi-faceted nature of the quest to achieve parenthood for some people. Drawing

upon sociological literature and dominant discourses surrounding what society perceives to be 'natural', Professor Letherby suggests that - while societal perceptions are changing - there may be stigma associated with involuntary childlessness that is not necessarily alleviated through adoption.

Interestingly, the book provides an account of the experiences of German infertile couples. This comparative account provides an interesting international perspective regarding the counselling process and new family formation. A further area of interest is the chapter by Dr Marilyn Crawshaw and Rachel Balen, who explore the adoption process from the perspective of professionals working with people with existing health conditions.

Dr Crawshaw and Ms Balen question whether people with acquired or congenital health conditions make suitable adoptive parents. The authors argue that - rather than being excluded as potential adoptive

parents - a full consideration of the wider implications of their health conditions should be undertaken. Thus, they contend professionals and adoption social workers need to draw upon a greater knowledge base, an analysis I would agree with.

In Chapter five, Dr Crawshaw's commentary would interest adoption social workers. Her account explores not only the feelings of potential adoptive parents; it also considers the impact of adoption on wider interpersonal relationships. She also provides useful assessment tools that can aid the work of adoption social workers in their assessment of couples suitable to become adoptive parents.

The following chapter provides an overview of the adoption process and the adoption panel's role. I believe this makes the chapter of interest to those considering adoption, particularly as it might help allay any fears prospective parents might have about panel meetings. The book also contains an analysis of

the perceptions of adoption and the willingness to adopt among British South Asian communities. This illustrates how these communities react towards involuntary childlessness and adoption.

The final chapters explore inter-country adoption, what it means to become a parent following adoption, the research and theories that underpin current understandings of nature and nurture, and the impact upon familial relationships following an adopted child's decision to seek their birth parents. These chapters further inform and enable the reader to explore a range of issues pertinent to this field.

One of the highlights of the book for me is the integration of the cultural perspective provided by Sally Baffour in Chapter eight. Her moving account of being a black adoptive parent provides an invaluable account of the issues she had to face. She also provides an account of life as an adoptive parent. I highly recommend this

book. The messages from practice, research and personal experience provide an important insight into the adoption process following an infertility diagnosis.

Buy *Adopting After Infertility: Messages from Practice, Research and Personal Experience* from [Amazon UK](#) or [Amazon USA](#).

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