THE PORTRAYAL OF HEALTHY WOMEN REQUESTING OOCYTE CRYOPRESERVATION
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Background
In the past few years fertility preservation for social reasons has been the subject of ethical debate. The different opinions that were voiced often go hand in hand with stereotyping of the women who might benefit from it. Although these portrayals may not lead the academic discussion, they are quite prominent in the lay media and shape public opinion. Therefore it is important to have an insight in the extent to which they are truthful.

Central questions
How are healthy women who request oocyte cryopreservation portrayed? Which positions follow from the different stereotypes? To what extent do the different stereotypes match or conflict with reality?

Results
Three dominant portrayals can be discerned. First, healthy women opting to cryopreserve oocytes have been portrayed as selfish career-pursuing women which leads to a position that does not support oocyte cryopreservation by healthy women. Second, they have been portrayed as victims of a male-oriented society that makes it difficult for women to combine motherhood with a good education or professional responsibilities. This narrative can either be invoked to support oocyte cryopreservation as something that women are entitled to or to denounce it as a way of sustaining social inequalities. Third, they are seen as wise, proactive women who opt to be their own egg donors rather than relying on a third party, which leads to a permissive stance. Neither of the three stereotypes gives a complete and accurate picture of the average woman opting for ‘social freezing’.