MANCHESTER 1824

The University of Manchester

Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

Exploring the older mother from different perspectives: the voices of women

In partial fulfilment of NIHR funded Master in Clinical Research degree

NHS National Institute for Health Research

Alison Cooke

Research Midwife

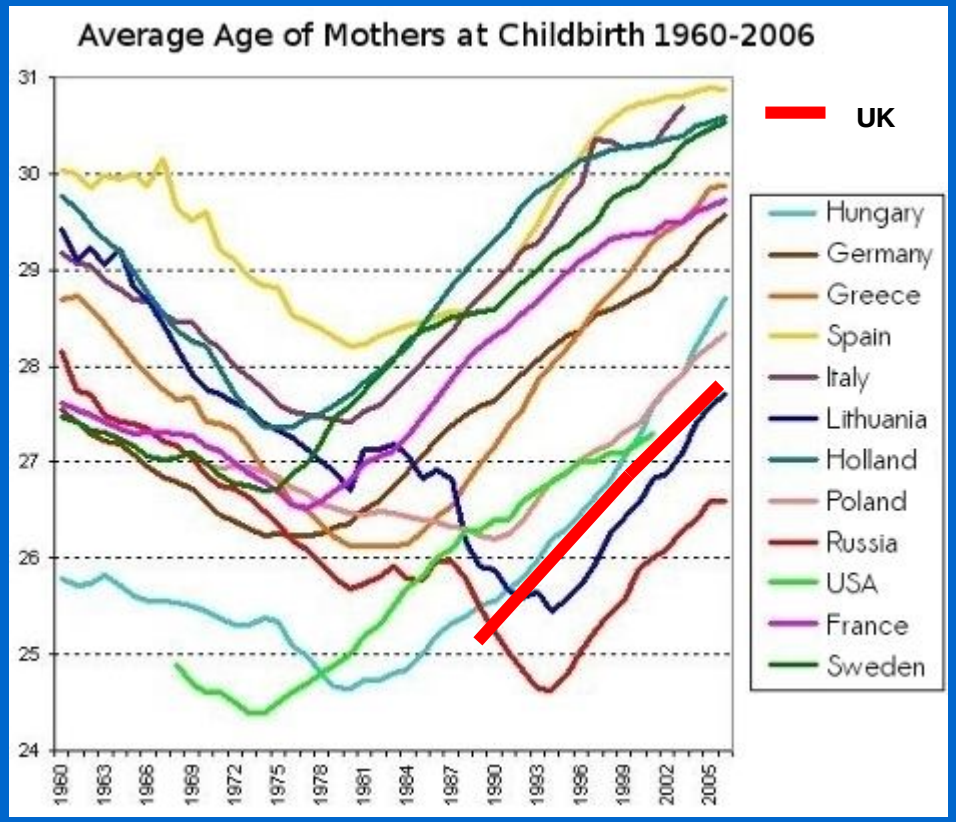
RCM Conference 16.11.10

Overview of the Literature

- Trend for maternal age at first birth has steadily risen (ONS 2007)
- Obstetric and neonatal risks of delayed childbearing are numerous
- Much of this research is methodologically limited
- Dearth of qualitative research
- Meta-synthesis of 12 qualitative papers (Cooke et al 2010); no UK based research

Worldwide phenomenon

www.sublimeoblivion.com/2009/04/26/rite-of-spring/

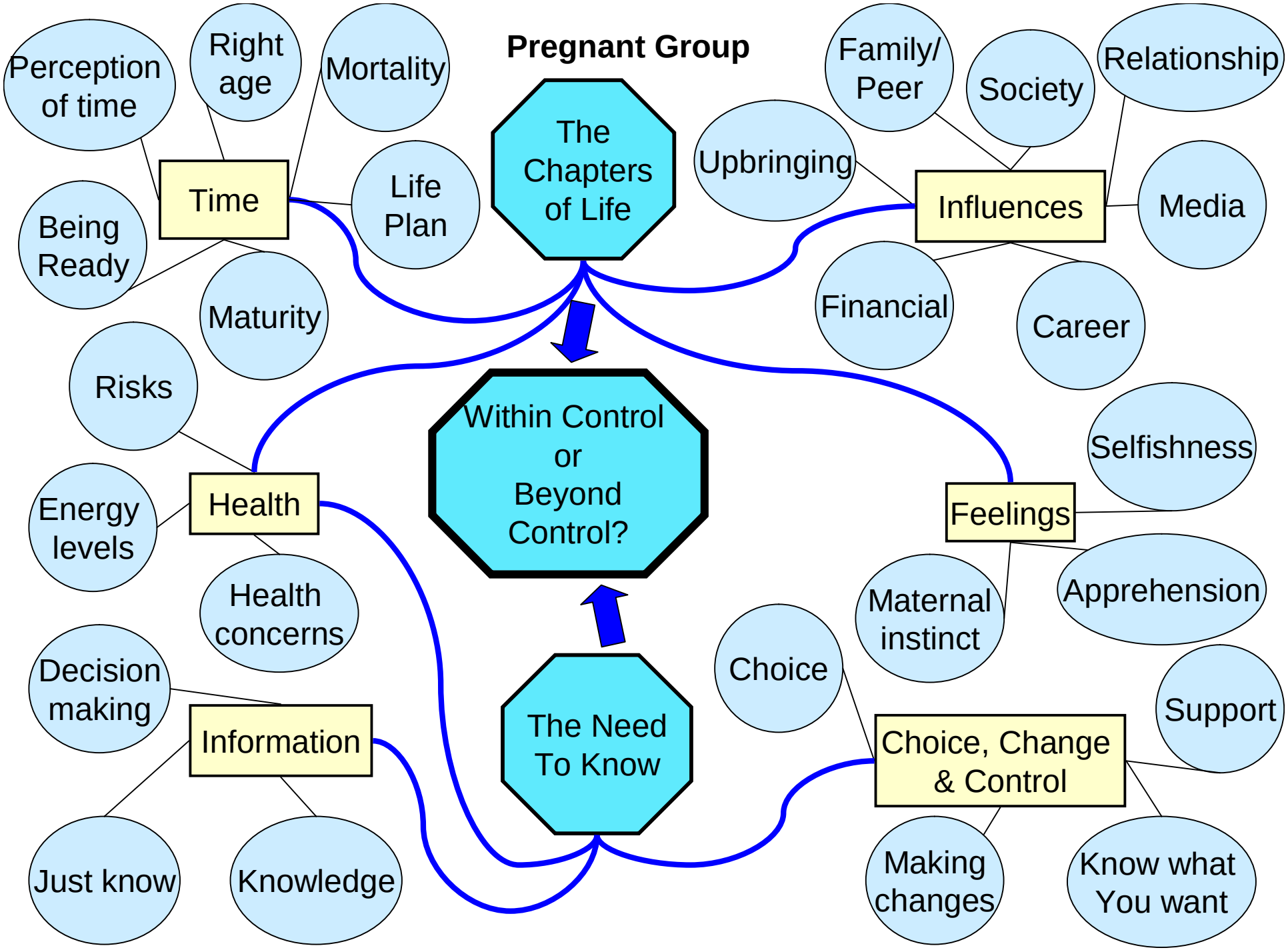


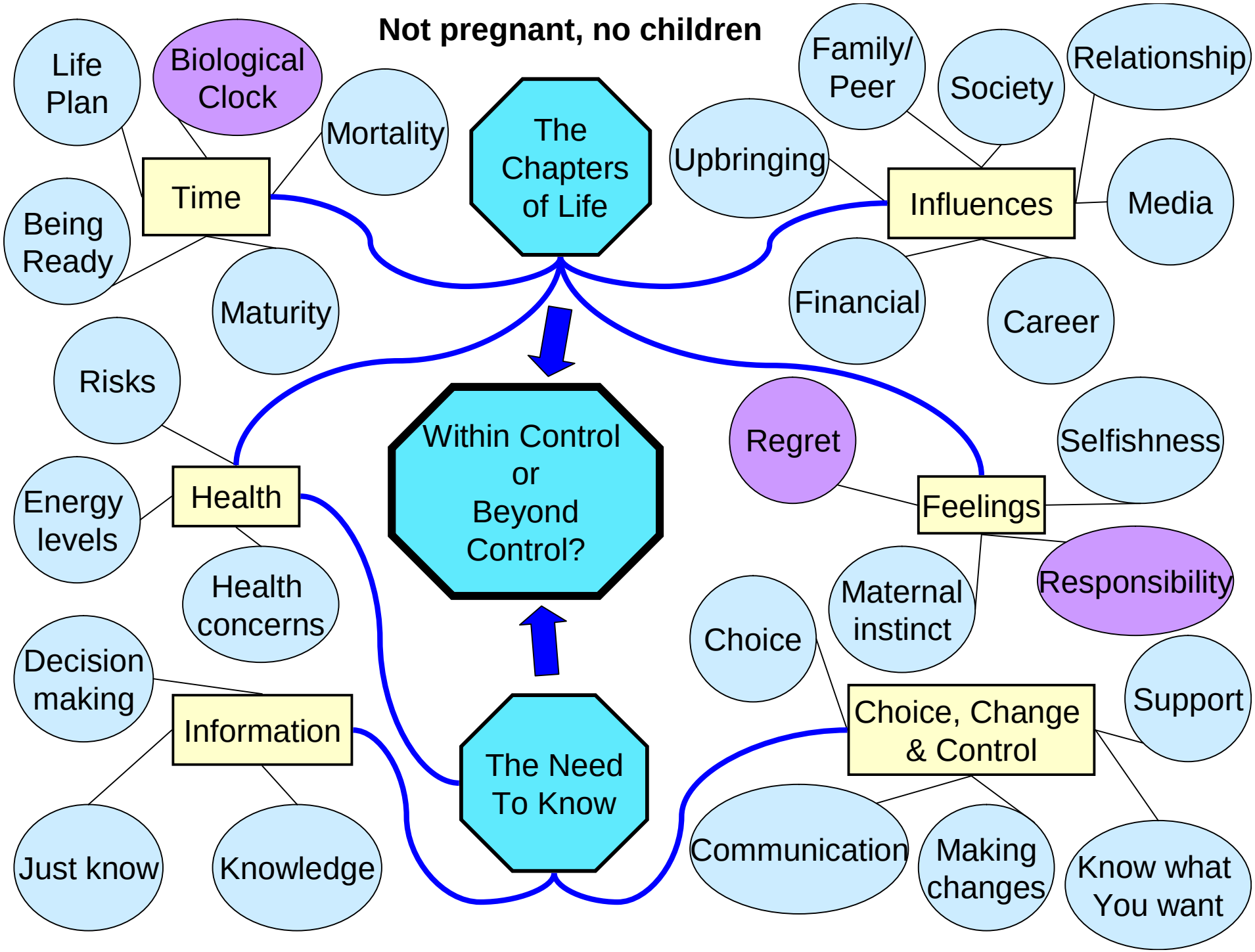
Methods

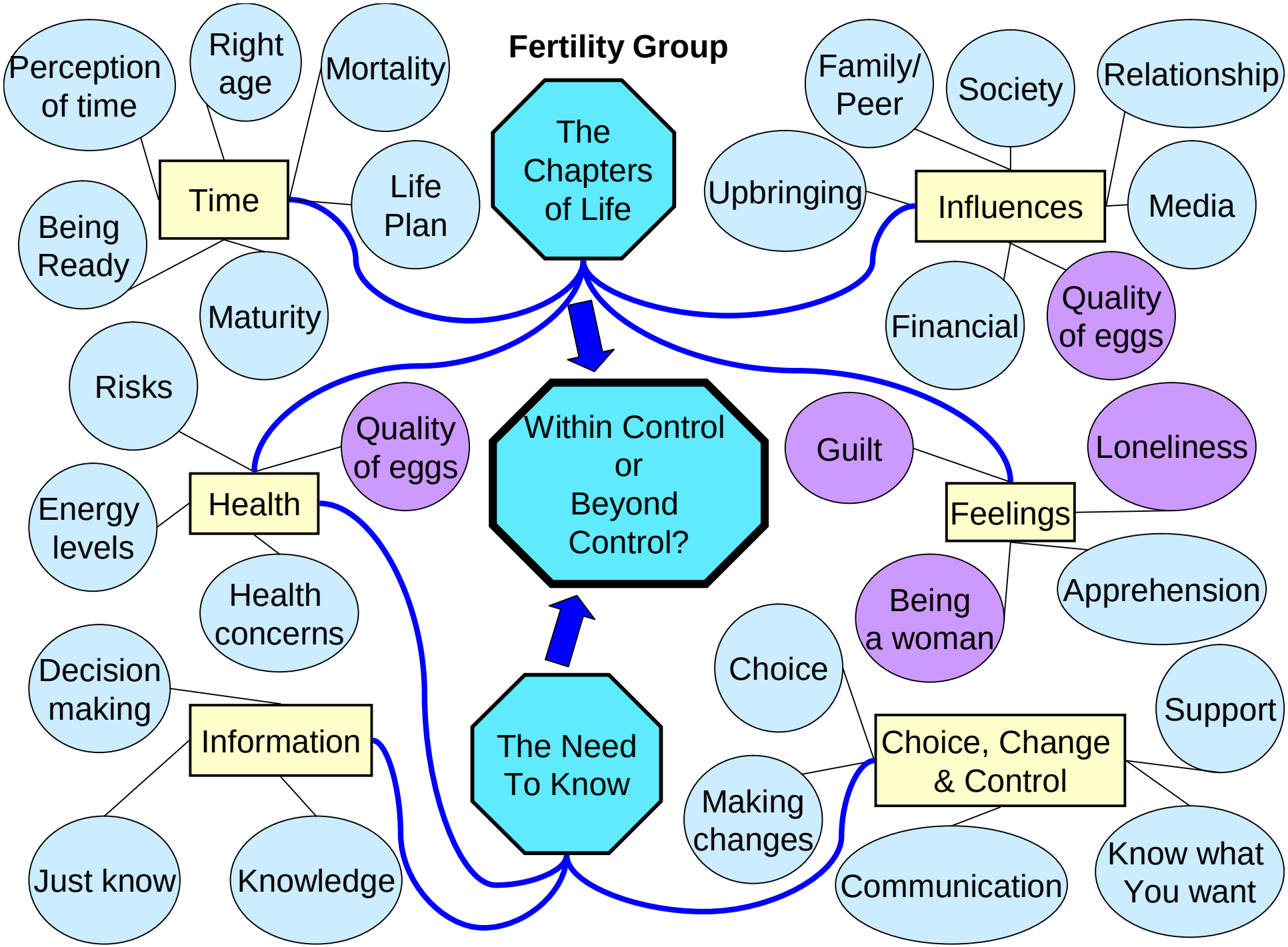
- Phenomenological methodology
- Purposive sample of 18 women age 35 or over (3 groups of 6)
  - *No children, not pregnant*
  - *Pregnant with first child*
  - *No children, not pregnant, attending fertility clinic*
- One interview of up to an hour and a short questionnaire

Analysis

- Thematic analysis with a hermeneutic (interpretative) approach, applying thematic networks for organisation (Attride-Stirling 2001)
- Emerging themes manually coded; three researchers independently
- Interpretation verified by sending summary of findings to participants


Pregnant Group
The Chapters of Life
Within Control or Beyond Control?
The Need To Know
Time
Perception of time
Right age
Mortality
Life Plan
Being Ready
Maturity
Risks
Health
Energy levels
Health concerns
Information
Decision making
Just know
Knowledge
Influences
Upbringing
Family/ Peer
Society
Relationship
Media
Financial
Career
Feelings
Selfishness
Maternal instinct
Apprehension
Choice, Change & Control
Choice
Support
Making changes
Know what You want


Not pregnant, no children
The Chapters of Life
Time
Life Plan
Biological Clock
Mortality
Being Ready
Maturity
Influences
Upbringing
Family/ Peer
Society
Relationship
Media
Financial
Career
Within Control or Beyond Control?
Health
Risks
Energy levels
Health concerns
Feelings
Regret
Selfishness
Responsibility
Maternal instinct
Choice, Change & Control
Choice
Support
Communication
Making changes
Know what You want
The Need To Know
Information
Decision making
Just know
Knowledge


Fertility Group
The Chapters of Life
Within Control or Beyond Control?
The Need To Know
Time
Perception of time
Right age
Mortality
Life Plan
Being Ready
Maturity
Influences
Family/ Peer
Society
Relationship
Upbringing
Media
Financial
Quality of eggs
Health
Risks
Quality of eggs
Energy levels
Health concerns
Feelings
Guilt
Loneliness
Apprehension
Being a woman
Information
Decision making
Just know
Knowledge
Choice, Change & Control
Choice
Support
Making changes
Communication
Know what You want

Analysis: The Chapters of Life

- *The Chapters of Life*

➢ Finding a stable relationship, 'being ready' and life experience priority

"*I <u>am</u> leaving it later than I would have chosen to do … I would have done it in my early 30s if I'd been with the right person*" Vicky, 38

Analysis: The Need to Know

- *The Need to Know*

➢ Women do not focus on obstetric risk; age alone not perceived as risk factor

➢ Lack of information about issues

"*It's too late to have the information when you first go to the doctor about "well I've been trying" … you need to know way before then*." Bella, 37

Analysis: The Phenomenon

Is the timing of childbearing within women's control or beyond their control?

- Perception of lack of choice and control – circumstances dictate timing

Within control or beyond control?

- "*It wasn't by choice that I wanted to have a child later in life*" Izzie, 37
- "There's that perception by a lot of people that women … choose to have a baby later in life … "they're very ambitious, they're very career minded" … it has absolutely never been my number one priority." Bella, 37
- "*To characterise it as being a choice … is wrong … it's a really complex issue that involves loads of factors, choice being a really small one. … other things have to be in place*." Sally, 37

Implications for Practice

- Further research and guidance on additional care for women of AMA eg RCOG/NICE
- More time at booking to address any issues re journey to date
- Health professional reflection on pre-conceptions

Conclusions

- Women do not perceive that they have ultimate choice or control over timing of childbearing.
- Health professionals need to understand the complexities surrounding women's reasons for delaying childbearing.
- Sensitive information and support should be provided allowing for varying perceptions of risk.
- Guidelines (eg RCOG/NICE) regarding care of these women may help professionals to provide optimum evidence based care.
- Women may benefit from pre-conception education, perhaps from high school age.

Thank you

© Barcroft Media

© Geoff Robinson Photography

© News Group Newspapers Ltd

Education Image Gallery

Education Image Gallery

Reference List

- Attride-Stirling, J (2001) Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research,* 1**,** 385-405
- Barcroft Media (2009) www.barcroftmedia.com Permission provided 29/10/09
- Cooke, A Mills, TA & Lavender, T (2010) 'Informed and uninformed decision making' – women's reasoning, experiences and perceptions with regard to advanced maternal age and delayed childbearing: a meta-synthesis *International Journal of Nursing Studies* 47(10) 1317-1329
- Education Image Gallery (2009) http://eig.edina.ac.uk [Accessed: 25 September 2009] The University of Manchester
- Geoff Robinson Photography (2009) www.geoffrobinsonphotography.co.uk Permission provided 12/10/09
- Karlin, A (2009) Rite of Spring: Russia Fertility Trends [Website] www.sublimeoblivion.com/2009/04/26/rite-of-spring/ [Accessed: 31 August 2009] translated from www.demoscope.ru Permission provided 15/10/09
- News Group Newspapers Ltd (2009) www.nisyndication.com/ Permission provided 15/10/09
- Office of National Statistics (2007) Birth Statistics: Review of the National Statistician on births and patterns of family building in England and Wales [Website] www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/FM1_36/FM1-no36.pdf [Accessed: 4 March 2009]