In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) is presented as a ‘choice’ and is widely perceived as an expected response to infertility. The decision to go down this treatment pathway can be costly both emotionally and financially however. A simple choice?

I am curious about the point at which a decision is made not to pursue IVF and what factors influence this. What is the emotional impact of that decision for both men and women? I would like to uncover the seldom heard voices of people experiencing this dilemma, and explore the personal stories of individuals, and couples, who decide not to explore IVF treatment.

Having children or becoming a parent is part of the ‘normal’ and natural expectation of human life-course. What happens when you are not part of that norm? You are faced with decisions.

Infertility, involuntary childlessness and the transition to non-parenthood are issues which have been widely researched (Mathews et al 1986; Exley and Letherby 2001; Ulrich and Wetherall 2000; Day 2017; Day 2017). Research seeks to substantiate the impact of infertility on both female, and to some extent male, identity, mental health and life-course outcomes, in the context of biological drivers and social expectation.

In the 21st century we are presented with ‘choices’ about health and lifestyle which would have been unavailable prior to technological advancements, changes in spending and lifestyle expectations. The rise, and sustaining, of ‘industries’ around beauty, fashion, and diet are symptomatic of this. This is being replicated in the field of fertility treatment. It presents us with challenging decisions which have potentially lifelong consequences for those making them.