




Narratives of Parenthood: Experiences of Adoptive Parents

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to explore and understand the experiences of adoptive parents, focusing on their motivations, challenges, integration processes, and long-term impacts on family dynamics.

Methods: This qualitative research employed a phenomenological approach, using semi-structured interviews to gather in-depth data from 24 adoptive parents. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring diverse representation in terms of age, gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnic background. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using NVivo software, following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework for thematic analysis. Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of the research questions.

Findings: The study identified four main themes: motivations for adoption, challenges during adoption, integration into the family, and long-term impact of adoption. Motivations included personal fulfillment, altruistic reasons, family balance, infertility issues, and social influences. Challenges encompassed bureaucratic hurdles, financial strain, emotional stress, social judgment, integration issues, and communication barriers. Successful integration involved efforts to foster parent-child bonding, manage sibling relationships, support cultural assimilation, address behavioral adjustments, provide educational support, consider health needs, and gain extended family acceptance. The long-term impact of adoption on family dynamics, identity formation, legal and social status, psychological well-being, community involvement, and future planning was significant.

Conclusion: Adoptive parenthood is a complex and transformative journey, marked by diverse motivations, significant challenges, and profound long-term impacts. The findings highlight the need for comprehensive support systems, inclusive policies, and continued research to address the evolving needs of adoptive families.

Keywords: Adoptive parents, motivations, challenges, integration, family dynamics.

1 Introduction

The motivations behind the decision to adopt are multifaceted and deeply personal. Daniluk and Hurtig-Mitchell (2003) highlight the themes of hope and healing that infertile couples experience through adoption, emphasizing the emotional fulfillment and sense of purpose it provides. For many, the inability to conceive biologically is a significant factor (Daniluk & Hurtig-Mitchell, 2003). Hanna and Gough (2016) describe the emotive struggles of infertility, which can lead individuals to seek alternative paths to parenthood (Hanna & Gough, 2016). In their study of lesbian and heterosexual couples transitioning from infertility to adoption, Goldberg, Downing, and Richardson (2009) found that the emotional journey from infertility to adoption is marked by both grief and hope, with adoption offering a new narrative of possibility (Goldberg et al., 2009).

Altruistic reasons also play a significant role in the decision to adopt. The desire to help a child in need and to contribute positively to society is a powerful motivator. Egan, O'Connor, and Egan (2022) discuss how adopted individuals readjust their identities in parenthood, often driven by a profound sense of altruism (Egan et al., 2022). Similarly, Messina and D'Amore (2018) highlight the challenges and barriers faced by lesbians and gay men in Europe on their journey to adoption, underscoring the altruistic desire to provide loving homes to children in need despite societal challenges (Messina & D'Amore, 2018).

The adoption process is not without its hurdles. One of the most significant challenges is navigating bureaucratic and legal complexities. Tasker and Wood (2016) describe adoption as a process fraught with uncertainties and legal intricacies that can prolong the wait and add stress to prospective parents (Tasker & Wood, 2016). The financial strain associated with adoption is another critical challenge. McKay, Ross, and Goldberg (2010) note that the costs of adoption can be substantial, requiring careful financial planning and, in some cases, fundraising efforts (McKay et al., 2010).

Emotional stress is inherent in the adoption journey. The uncertainty about the outcome, coupled with the fear of rejection, can be overwhelming. Goldberg and Smith (2014) found that parenting stress levels in adoptive parents, including lesbian, gay, and heterosexual couples, are significant during the early stages of parenthood, compounded by the emotional toll of the adoption process itself. Social judgment and stigmatization also pose

considerable challenges (Goldberg & Smith, 2014). Palacios et al. (2018) discuss the misconceptions and lack of community support that adoptive parents often face, which can lead to feelings of isolation and stress (Palacios et al., 2018).

Integration issues, such as bonding difficulties, sibling rivalry, and cultural differences, are common post-adoption challenges. Finet et al. (2019) explore how pre-adoption experiences and adoptive parenting styles influence the behavioral adjustment of adopted children, highlighting the complexities of integrating a new member into the family (Finet et al., 2019). Communication barriers, particularly in cases involving international adoptions, can further complicate the integration process. Garvin et al. (2012) emphasize the importance of effective communication and understanding expectations to foster positive parent-child relationships (Garvin et al., 2012).

The process of integrating an adopted child into the family is multifaceted and requires considerable effort and sensitivity. Building trust and attachment are crucial for successful parent-child bonding. Raby and Dozier (2019) discuss the importance of attachment across the lifespan, particularly in adoptive families, where initial bonding experiences can shape long-term relationships (Raby & Dozier, 2019).

Sibling relationships also require careful management to ensure positive interactions and minimize rivalry. Borders, Black, and Pasley (1998) highlight the potential for negative outcomes if sibling relationships are not properly nurtured, emphasizing the need for fostering positive dynamics. Cultural assimilation is another critical aspect, especially in transracial or international adoptions (Borders et al., 1998). Juffer et al. (2011) stress the importance of embracing the child's cultural background and heritage to promote a sense of belonging and identity (Juffer et al., 2011).

Behavioral adjustments are often necessary as children adapt to their new environments. This includes managing trauma responses, setting boundaries, and creating consistent routines. The study by Goldberg and Smith (2014) indicates that structured and supportive environments are essential for the psychological well-being of adopted children (Goldberg & Smith, 2014). Educational support, including accessing resources and managing school transitions, is vital for the child's academic success. Wexler et al. (2023) view adoption through a reproductive justice lens, advocating for equitable access to educational and support services for all adopted children (Wexler et al., 2023).

Health considerations, both physical and mental, are paramount in the post-adoption period. Regular medical check-ups and mental health support play crucial roles in ensuring the well-being of adopted children. Ceballo et al. (2003) compare the experiences of biological, adoptive, and stepparents, highlighting the unique health challenges faced by adoptive families (Ceballo et al., 2003).

Acceptance by extended family members can significantly impact the integration process. Educating relatives about adoption and overcoming prejudices are essential steps toward inclusive family dynamics. Wood (2017) conceptualizes kinship in gay and lesbian adoption, underscoring the importance of extended family acceptance in fostering a supportive environment for the child (Wood, 2017).

Adoption has profound long-term impacts on family dynamics and the psychological well-being of both parents and children. The process reshapes family roles and relationships, fostering long-term relationship building and family cohesion. Daniluk and Hurtig-Mitchell (2003) highlight how adoption can bring families closer together, transforming their dynamics and enhancing their sense of unity (Daniluk & Hurtig-Mitchell, 2003).

The formation of identity is a crucial aspect for adopted children, who must navigate their heritage and develop self-esteem. Egan, O'Connor, and Egan (2022) explore how adopted individuals readjust their identities in parenthood, emphasizing the importance of understanding and integrating their dual identities. Legal and social status issues, such as citizenship and social identity, are also critical considerations. Levy-Shiff, Goldshmidt, and Har-Even (1991) discuss the challenges adoptive families face in securing their children's legal rights and social standing (Levy-Shiff et al., 1991).

The psychological well-being of adopted children is a key area of focus. Garvin et al. (2012) emphasize the need for emotional resilience and long-term counseling to support adopted children through their developmental stages (Garvin et al., 2012). Community involvement, including participation in adoption networks and advocacy, provides essential support and resources for adoptive families. Messina and D'Amore (2018) highlight the role of community support systems in overcoming the challenges of adoption (Messina & D'Amore, 2018).

Future planning, including financial security and education plans, is critical for the long-term success of adopted children. Moyer and Goldberg (2015) discuss how adoptive parents adapt to unmet expectations and plan for

their children's futures, ensuring they have the necessary resources and opportunities to thrive (Moyer & Goldberg, 2015).

Adoptive parenthood is a complex and transformative journey, marked by diverse motivations, significant challenges, and profound long-term impacts. This study, through qualitative exploration of adoptive parents' narratives, sheds light on the multifaceted experiences that define adoptive families. By understanding these experiences, we can better support adoptive parents and their children, ensuring they have the resources and guidance needed to navigate the unique challenges and rewards of adoption. The insights gained from this research contribute to the broader discourse on adoption, advocating for policies and practices that promote the well-being and integration of adopted children into their new families.

2 Methods and Materials

2.1 Study Design and Participants

This qualitative research aims to explore and understand the experiences of adoptive parents through the lens of their personal narratives. The study employs a phenomenological approach to capture the depth and richness of these experiences. Data collection was conducted using semi-structured interviews, ensuring a flexible yet guided conversation that allowed participants to express their thoughts and feelings comprehensively.

The participants of this study were adoptive parents who have legally adopted children through various agencies. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select participants who could provide rich and diverse insights into the phenomenon of adoptive parenthood. The inclusion criteria required participants to have at least one adopted child and to have been involved in the adoptive process for a minimum of one year. A total of 20 adoptive parents were interviewed, ensuring a diverse representation in terms of age, gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnic background.

The process of data collection continued until theoretical saturation was achieved. This point was reached when additional interviews no longer provided new insights or significant variations in the emerging themes. Theoretical saturation ensured that the data collected was comprehensive and sufficient to address the research questions thoroughly.

2.2 Measures

2.2.1 Semi-Structured Interview

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed for in-depth exploration of participants' experiences while providing enough structure to maintain consistency across interviews. An interview guide was developed, focusing on key themes such as motivations for adoption, challenges faced during the adoption process, integration of the adopted child into the family, and the long-term impact of adoption on family dynamics.

Each interview lasted between 60 to 90 minutes and was conducted either in person or via video conferencing, depending on the participant's preference and geographical location. All interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent to ensure accurate capture of their narratives.

2.3 Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using NVivo software, which facilitated the organization and coding of qualitative data. Thematic analysis was employed to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within the data. The analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework for thematic analysis:

Familiarization with the data: Transcripts were read and re-read to immerse the researcher in the data.

Generating initial codes: Initial codes were produced by systematically coding interesting features across the entire data set.

Searching for themes: Codes were collated into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.

Reviewing themes: Themes were checked against the coded extracts and the entire data set to ensure coherence.

Defining and naming themes: Each theme was refined, clearly defined, and named to encapsulate its essence.

Producing the report: The final analysis was integrated into the report, illustrating themes with selected data extracts.

3 Findings and Results

The study included 24 adoptive parents, providing a diverse sample in terms of age, gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnic background. The participants ranged in age from 30 to 55 years, with a mean age of 42 years. Gender distribution was relatively balanced, with 13 females and 11 males. In terms of socioeconomic status, 10 participants reported an annual household income of \$50,000 to \$100,000, 8 reported incomes between \$100,000 and \$150,000, and 6 reported incomes above \$150,000. Ethnically, the sample included 14 Caucasian participants, 5 African American, 3 Hispanic, and 2 Asian individuals.

Table 1

The Results of Qualitative Studies

Category	Subcategory	Concepts
Motivations for Adoption	Personal Fulfillment	Desire for parenthood, Emotional satisfaction, Sense of purpose
	Altruistic Reasons	Helping a child in need, Giving back to society, Fostering
	Family Balance	Gender balance in the family, Sibling companionship, Family expansion
	Infertility Issues	Medical infertility, Failed fertility treatments, Emotional struggles
Challenges During Adoption	Social Influences	Cultural expectations, Influence of friends/family, Media portrayals
	Bureaucratic Hurdles	Lengthy paperwork, Legal complexities, Waiting periods
	Financial Strain	Adoption costs, Financial planning, Fundraising efforts
	Emotional Stress	Anxiety during the process, Uncertainty about the future, Fear of rejection
	Social Judgment	Stigmatization, Misconceptions about adoption, Lack of support from community
Integration into the Family	Integration Issues	Bonding difficulties, Sibling rivalry, Cultural differences
	Communication Barriers	Language differences, Misunderstanding expectations, Navigating birth family relationships
	Parent-Child Bonding	Building trust, Attachment processes, Shared activities
	Sibling Relationships	Sibling rivalry, Fostering positive relationships, Role adjustments
	Cultural Assimilation	Embracing child's background, Celebrating cultural heritage, Language acquisition
	Behavioral Adjustments	Managing trauma responses, Setting boundaries, Creating routines
	Educational Support	Accessing resources, School transitions, Academic progress
	Health Considerations	Addressing medical needs, Mental health support, Developmental assessments
	Extended Family	Educating relatives, Inclusive family events, Overcoming prejudice
	Acceptance	

Long-term Impact of Adoption	Family Dynamics	Changes in family roles, Long-term relationship building, Family cohesion
	Identity Formation	Understanding heritage, Developing self-esteem, Navigating dual identities
	Legal and Social Status	Citizenship issues, Legal rights, Social identity
	Psychological Well-being	Emotional resilience, Coping mechanisms, Long-term counseling needs
	Community Involvement	Participation in adoption networks, Advocacy for adoption issues, Community support systems
	Future Planning	Financial security for the child, Education plans, Legacy considerations

3.1 Motivations for Adoption

Personal Fulfillment: Adoptive parents often cited a strong desire for parenthood as a primary motivator. Emotional satisfaction and a sense of purpose also played significant roles. One participant shared, "I've always wanted to be a parent, and adoption gave me that opportunity when natural conception wasn't possible."

Altruistic Reasons: Many parents expressed altruistic reasons for adopting, such as helping a child in need and giving back to society. As one parent noted, "We felt that we could provide a loving home to a child who needed one, and that was very important to us."

Family Balance: Some parents adopted to achieve gender balance within their families or to provide companionship for their existing children. "Our daughter wanted a sibling, and we felt that adopting a boy would complete our family," said another interviewee.

Infertility Issues: Infertility was a common reason for adoption, with parents often having faced medical infertility and failed fertility treatments. "After several unsuccessful IVF attempts, we decided that adoption was the right path for us," one parent explained.

Social Influences: Social and cultural influences also impacted the decision to adopt. Participants mentioned cultural expectations, the influence of friends and family, and media portrayals of adoption. "We were inspired by friends who had adopted and by positive stories in the media," remarked one participant.

3.2 Challenges During Adoption

Bureaucratic Hurdles: Adoptive parents frequently encountered lengthy paperwork, legal complexities, and prolonged waiting periods. "The legal process was overwhelming and took much longer than we anticipated," shared one parent.

Financial Strain: The financial burden of adoption was significant for many families, encompassing adoption costs, financial planning, and sometimes fundraising efforts. One

parent stated, "We had to save for years and even held fundraising events to cover the costs."

Emotional Stress: The adoption process was fraught with emotional stress, including anxiety, uncertainty about the future, and fear of rejection. "Waiting for the final approval was nerve-wracking; we were constantly anxious about the outcome," said a participant.

Social Judgment: Adoptive parents often faced stigmatization and misconceptions about adoption, leading to a lack of community support. One interviewee mentioned, "People would ask insensitive questions and make assumptions that were hurtful and untrue."

Integration Issues: Challenges in integrating the adopted child into the family included bonding difficulties, sibling rivalry, and cultural differences. "It took time for our biological children to accept their new sibling, and we had to navigate many cultural adjustments," explained a parent.

Communication Barriers: Language differences and misunderstandings in expectations sometimes complicated relationships with adopted children and their birth families. One parent shared, "We had to work hard to communicate effectively, especially since our child spoke a different language initially."

3.3 Integration into the Family

Parent-Child Bonding: Building trust and attachment were crucial for successful integration. Parents engaged in shared activities to foster these bonds. "We spent a lot of time doing activities together to build trust and create a strong bond," one parent noted.

Sibling Relationships: Managing sibling rivalry and fostering positive relationships between adopted and biological children were common concerns. "There were initial tensions, but over time, they developed a close bond," said a participant.

Cultural Assimilation: Embracing the child's cultural background and celebrating their heritage helped in cultural assimilation. "We make it a point to celebrate our child's cultural festivals and traditions," shared a parent.

Behavioral Adjustments: Adoptive parents had to manage trauma responses, set boundaries, and establish routines.

"Creating a consistent routine helped our child feel secure and adjust better," one parent explained.

Educational Support: Accessing educational resources and managing school transitions were critical. "We worked closely with teachers to ensure our child received the support they needed at school," mentioned one interviewee.

Health Considerations: Addressing medical and mental health needs was a priority. "Regular check-ups and mental health support were essential for our child's well-being," noted a parent.

Extended Family Acceptance: Educating relatives and overcoming prejudice were important for family harmony. "It took time, but eventually, our extended family became very supportive and inclusive," said one participant.

3.4 Long-term Impact of Adoption

Family Dynamics: Adoption brought changes in family roles and long-term relationship building, contributing to family cohesion. "Adoption transformed our family dynamics, bringing us closer together," shared one parent.

Identity Formation: Adopted children's understanding of their heritage and development of self-esteem were central. "We encourage our child to explore their heritage and take pride in their identity," remarked a parent.

Legal and Social Status: Navigating issues related to citizenship, legal rights, and social identity was essential. "Ensuring our child had all necessary legal documents was a crucial step," noted one interviewee.

Psychological Well-being: Fostering emotional resilience and providing long-term counseling were important. "Ongoing counseling has been beneficial for our child's emotional health," said a parent.

Community Involvement: Participation in adoption networks and advocacy was common among adoptive parents. "Being part of an adoption community has provided immense support and resources," mentioned one participant.

Future Planning: Financial security and education plans were major considerations for the future. "We have set up a college fund to ensure our child's future is secure," shared a parent.

4 Discussion and Conclusion

This study explored the narratives of adoptive parents to understand their motivations, challenges, integration processes, and long-term impacts on family dynamics. The findings revealed that motivations for adoption were primarily driven by personal fulfillment, altruistic reasons,

family balance, infertility issues, and social influences. Challenges encountered during the adoption process included bureaucratic hurdles, financial strain, emotional stress, social judgment, integration issues, and communication barriers. Integration into the family involved efforts to foster parent-child bonding, manage sibling relationships, support cultural assimilation, address behavioral adjustments, provide educational support, consider health needs, and gain extended family acceptance. The long-term impact of adoption on family dynamics, identity formation, legal and social status, psychological well-being, community involvement, and future planning was significant.

The motivations for adoption identified in this study align with previous research. Daniluk and Hurtig-Mitchell (2003) emphasized the themes of hope and healing experienced by infertile couples through adoption, underscoring the emotional fulfillment and sense of purpose adoption provides. The desire to help a child in need and contribute positively to society was also highlighted by Egan, O'Connor, and Egan (2022), who discussed the altruistic motivations of adoptive parents. The financial and social challenges associated with infertility, as discussed by Hanna and Gough (2016), further support the findings that infertility issues are a significant motivator for adoption. Additionally, the influence of social and cultural factors on the decision to adopt, as noted by Goldberg, Downing, and Richardson (2009), is consistent with the motivations identified in this study (Daniluk & Hurtig-Mitchell, 2003; Egan et al., 2022; Goldberg et al., 2009; Hanna & Gough, 2016).

The challenges faced during the adoption process were consistent with existing literature. Tasker and Wood (2016) described the adoption process as fraught with bureaucratic and legal complexities, which were echoed by participants in this study. The financial strain associated with adoption, highlighted by McKay, Ross, and Goldberg (2010), was also a significant challenge for many participants. Emotional stress and uncertainty about the outcome, as discussed by Goldberg and Smith (2014), were common experiences among adoptive parents in this study. Social judgment and stigmatization, as described by Palacios et al. (2018), further compounded the challenges faced by adoptive parents. The difficulties in integrating the adopted child into the family, including bonding issues and sibling rivalry, were consistent with the findings of Finet et al. (2019). Communication barriers, particularly in international adoptions, were highlighted by Garvin et al. (2012), supporting the

challenges identified in this study (Finet et al., 2019; Garvin et al., 2012; Goldberg & Smith, 2014; McKay et al., 2010; Palacios et al., 2018; Tasker & Wood, 2016).

The integration of adopted children into their new families involved several critical factors. Building trust and attachment, was crucial for successful parent-child bonding. Managing sibling relationships (Raby & Dozier, 2019) and fostering positive dynamics (Borders et al., 1998) were essential for family harmony. Cultural assimilation and embracing the child's heritage, as emphasized by Juffer et al. (2011), were important for promoting a sense of belonging and identity. Addressing behavioral adjustments and creating consistent routines, as noted by Goldberg and Smith (2014), were necessary for the psychological well-being of adopted children. Educational support and managing school transitions, as discussed by Wexler et al. (2023), were vital for the academic success of adopted children. Health considerations, both physical and mental, were paramount, consistent with the findings of Ceballo et al. (2003). Gaining acceptance from extended family members, as highlighted by Wood (2017), was important for fostering an inclusive family environment (Ceballo et al., 2003; Goldberg & Smith, 2014; Wexler et al., 2023; Wood, 2017).

The long-term impact of adoption on family dynamics and psychological well-being was profound. Adoption reshaped family roles and relationships, fostering long-term relationship building and family cohesion, as discussed by Daniluk and Hurtig-Mitchell (2003). The formation of identity for adopted children, including navigating their heritage and developing self-esteem, was consistent with the findings of Egan, O'Connor, and Egan (2022). Legal and social status issues, such as citizenship and social identity, were critical considerations, as highlighted by Levy-Shiff, Goldshmidt, and Har-Even (1991). The psychological well-being of adopted children, including emotional resilience and long-term counseling needs, was emphasized by Garvin et al. (2012). Community involvement and participation in adoption networks, as discussed by Messina and D'Amore (2018), provided essential support for adoptive families. Future planning, including financial security and education plans, was crucial for the long-term success of adopted children, consistent with the findings of Moyer and Goldberg (2015) (Daniluk & Hurtig-Mitchell, 2003; Egan et al., 2022; Garvin et al., 2012; Levy-Shiff et al., 1991; Messina & D'Amore, 2018; Moyer & Goldberg, 2015).

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample size was relatively small, with only 24 participants, which may limit the

generalizability of the findings. While the qualitative approach provided in-depth insights into the experiences of adoptive parents, the small sample size may not capture the full diversity of adoptive families. Second, the study relied on self-reported data from interviews, which may be subject to social desirability bias or selective memory. Participants may have presented their experiences in a more favorable light or omitted negative aspects. Third, the study focused primarily on adoptive parents and did not include the perspectives of adopted children, which would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the adoption experience. Finally, the study did not account for variations in adoption contexts, such as domestic versus international adoptions or differences in the legal and cultural frameworks of adoption across countries.

Future research should address the limitations identified in this study to provide a more comprehensive understanding of adoptive parenthood. Larger, more diverse samples are needed to capture the full range of experiences and perspectives of adoptive families. Including the voices of adopted children, as well as other family members, would enrich the understanding of the adoption experience from multiple viewpoints. Longitudinal studies tracking families over time could provide valuable insights into the long-term impacts of adoption on family dynamics, identity formation, and psychological well-being. Comparative studies examining different types of adoption, such as domestic versus international or open versus closed adoptions, would help to identify specific challenges and best practices associated with each context. Additionally, research exploring the role of social support networks, community involvement, and policy frameworks in facilitating successful adoption experiences would be beneficial.

Practitioners working with adoptive families can benefit from the insights gained in this study to support and guide parents through the adoption process and beyond. Providing comprehensive pre-adoption training and counseling can help prepare prospective parents for the challenges they may face and equip them with effective strategies for integration and bonding. Offering ongoing post-adoption support, including access to mental health services, educational resources, and community support groups, is crucial for the well-being of adoptive families. Practitioners should also work to raise awareness and educate the broader community about adoption, addressing misconceptions and reducing stigma to create a more supportive environment for adoptive families. Advocacy for policies that streamline the adoption process, reduce financial burdens, and provide equitable

access to support services is essential for promoting the success and well-being of adoptive families. Finally, practitioners should recognize and honor the cultural backgrounds of adopted children, supporting families in embracing and celebrating their child's heritage.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the experiences of adoptive parents, highlighting the multifaceted nature of adoptive parenthood. By understanding the motivations, challenges, integration processes, and long-term impacts on family dynamics, we can better support adoptive families and promote the well-being of adopted children. The findings underscore the need for comprehensive support systems, inclusive policies, and continued research to address the evolving needs of adoptive families.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethics Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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