

# Measures to promote infertility treatment leave

In the labor environment, there are many cases in which infertility treatment leave is not available or workers are not aware of the existence of such leave.

The Korean Women's Development Institute has investigated the level of awareness and use of infertility treatment leave among infertile female workers and suggested policy measures to protect the labor rights of infertile women.

**Here are the results of our research.**



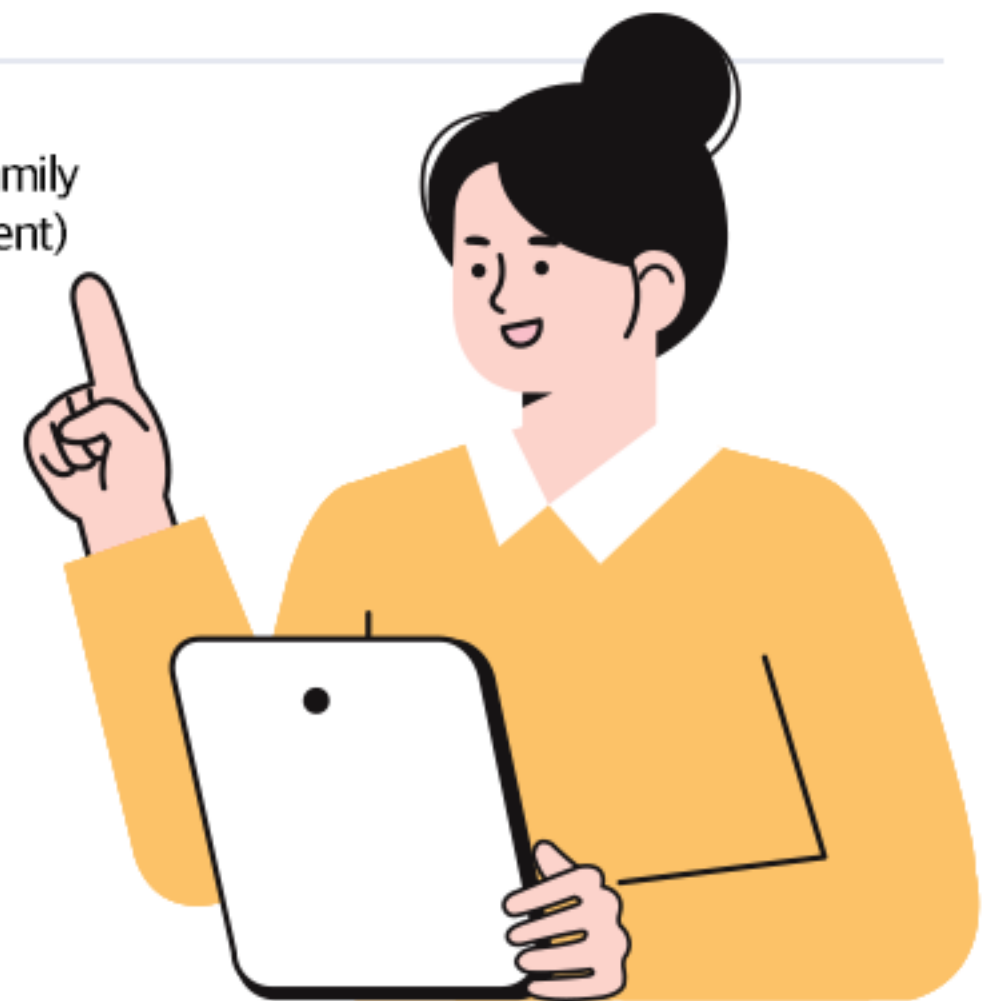
# What is infertility treatment leave?

Infertility treatment leave (referred to as 'leave of absence for subfertility treatment' according to the Equal Employment Opportunity and Work-Family Balance Assistance Act) was introduced in 2017 with a goal to prevent career disruptions among infertile workers and to address the country's low birth rate.

Article 18-3 of the Equal Employment Opportunity and Work-Family Balance Assistance Act (Leave of absence for subfertility treatment)

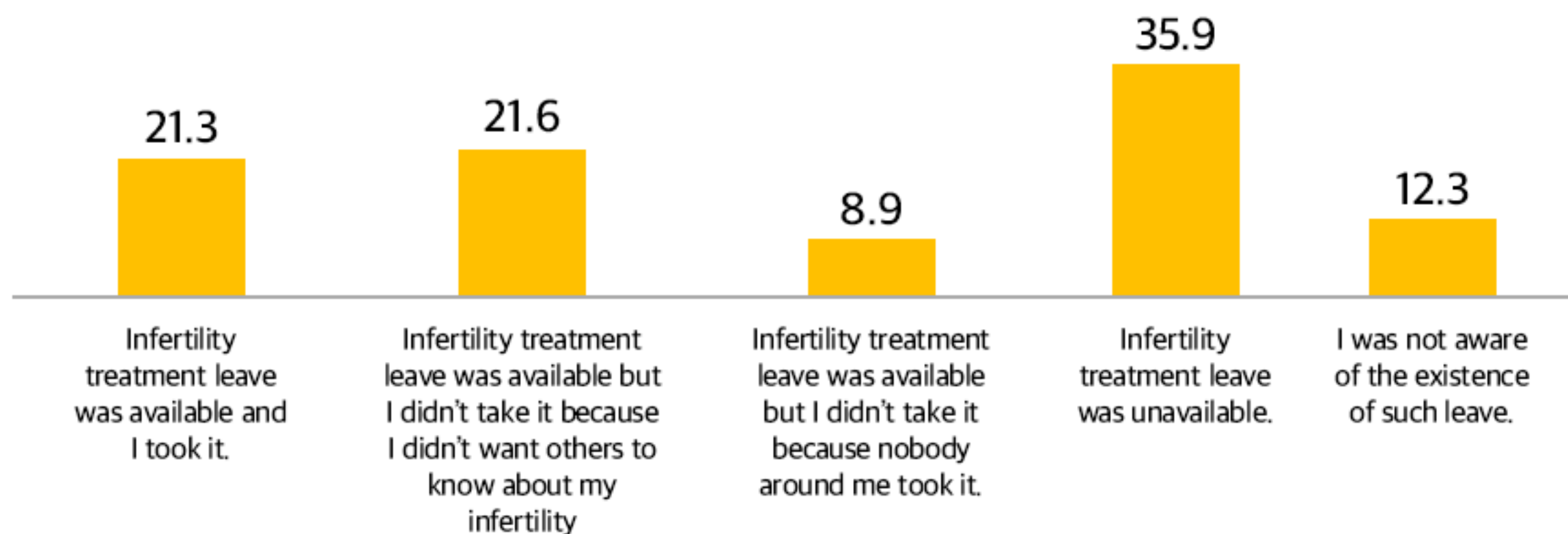
1 Where an employee applies for a leave of absence to receive subfertility treatment (hereinafter referred to as "leave of absence for subfertility treatment") such as artificial insemination or in vitro fertilization, an employer shall grant a leave of absence to the employee for a period not exceeding three days a year, and in such cases, the first one day shall be a paid leave of absence: Provided that where granting a leave of absence for a period as requested by the employee significantly impedes the operation of normal business, the employer may change the period in consultation with the employee.

2 No employer shall give disadvantageous treatment such as dismissal or disciplinary punishment on the grounds that an employee takes a leave of absence for subfertility treatment.



## Experience of using infertility treatment leave

In reality, however, many female workers were not able to take infertility treatment leave. According to our survey, **only one out of five paid employees said that they were able to take time off for infertility treatment.** Three out of ten did not take time off because they did not want others to know about their infertility or because nobody around them took infertility treatment leave.

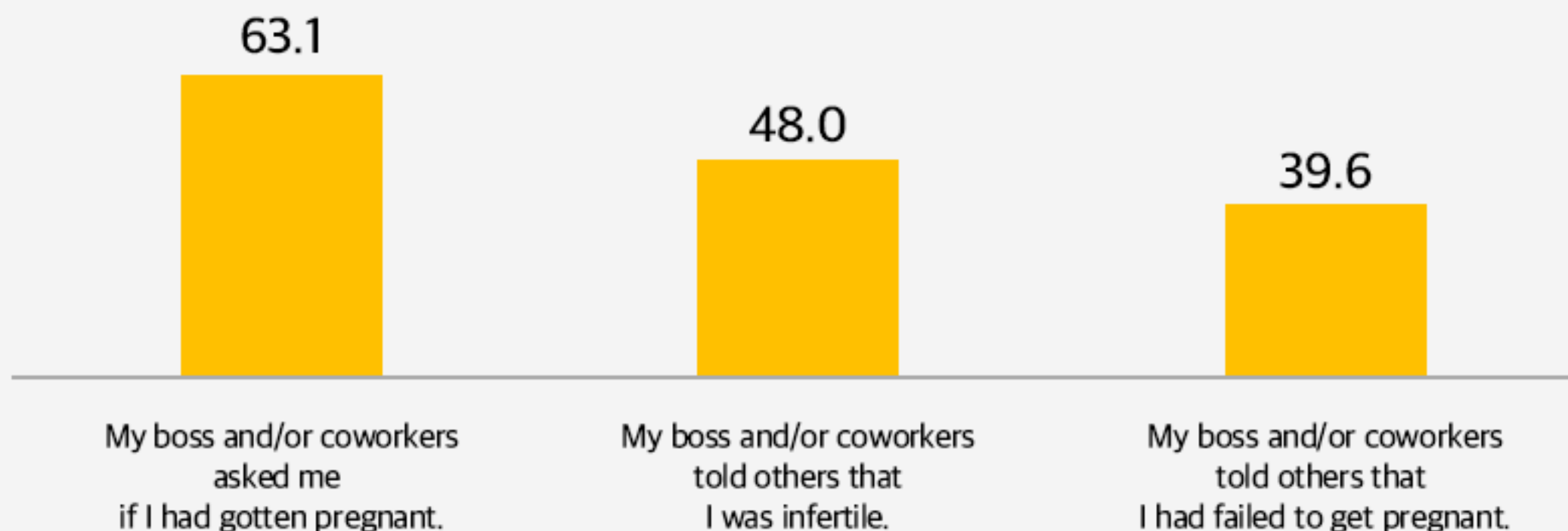


\* Note) This is based on the responses from 527 paid employees.

# Uncomfortable interactions with bosses and/or coworkers regarding infertility treatment

56.5% of paid employees said that their bosses and/or coworkers knew about their receiving infertility treatment. They often **felt uncomfortable when their bosses and/or coworkers asked them about their treatment and the outcomes.**

Those who experienced uncomfortable interactions with their bosses and/or coworkers who knew about their receiving infertility treatment (%)



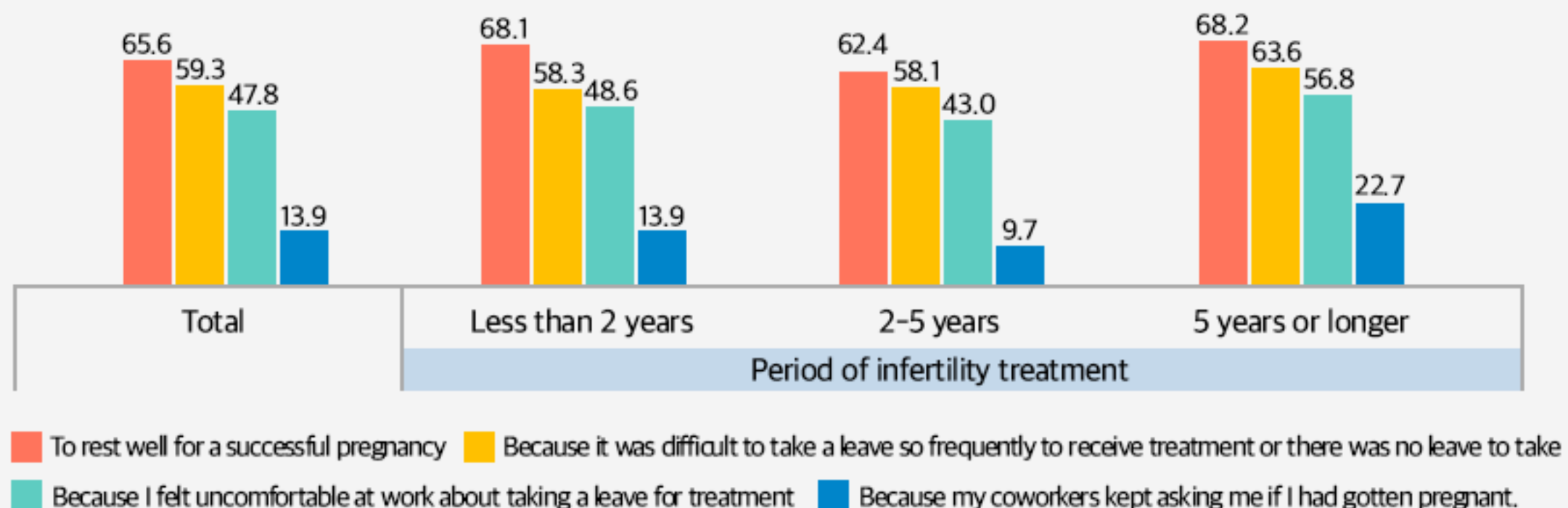
\* This is based on the responses from 298 paid employees who said that their bosses and coworkers knew about their infertility.

## Reasons for quitting jobs during the process of infertility treatment

The most common answer was “To rest well for a successful pregnancy” (65.6%), followed by “Because it was difficult to take a leave so frequently to receive treatment or there was no leave to take” (59.3%).

As the period of receiving infertility treatment got longer, women tended to quit their jobs because they felt uncomfortable at work about taking a leave for treatment” (47.8%) and because their coworkers kept asking them if they had gotten pregnant (13.9%).

Reasons for quitting jobs during the process of infertility treatment (%)

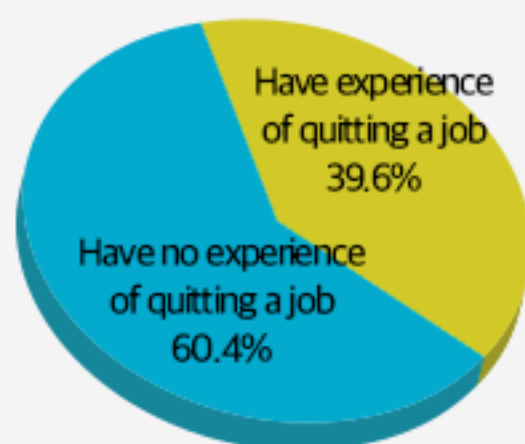




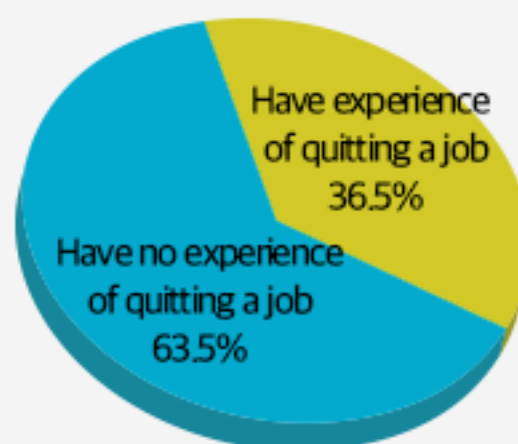
# Reasons for quitting jobs during the process of infertility treatment

Employees whose employment status was unstable or who worked at small companies had the lowest rate of availability and use of infertility treatment leave and the highest rate of quitting jobs during the process of treatment.

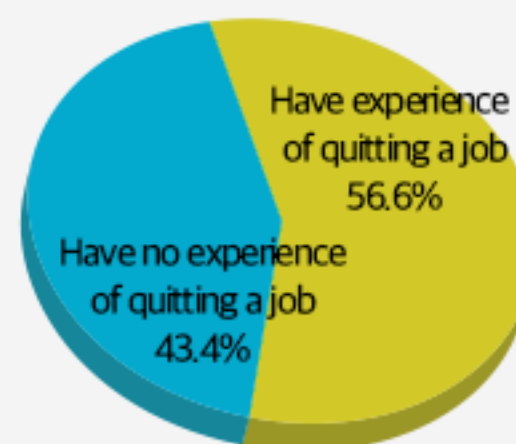
## Experience of quitting jobs during the process of infertility treatment by employment and company types



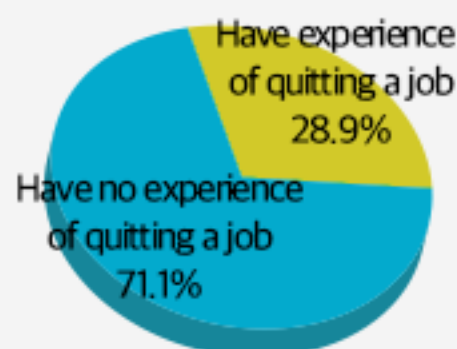
Total



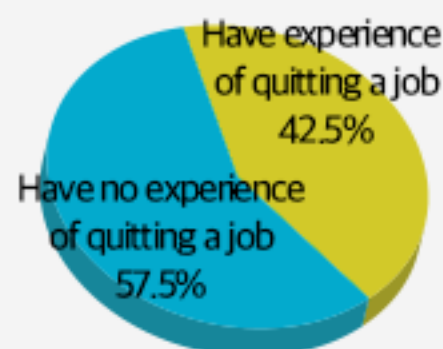
Regular workers



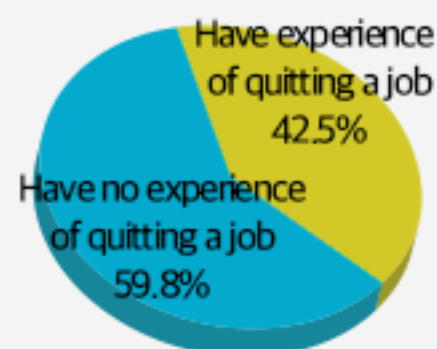
Irregular workers



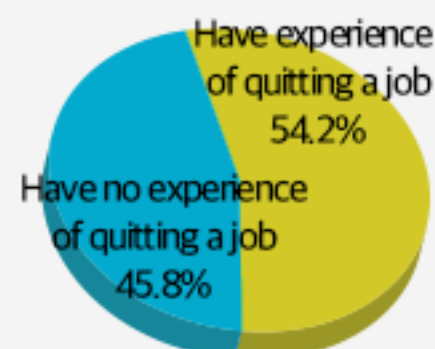
Public employees and teachers



Employees at large companies



Employees at small and mid-sized companies



Employees at companies with five or fewer

# Measures to promote infertility treatment leave for infertile female workers

Policies should be improved in order to make infertility treatment leave easily accessible by infertile female workers.

- ✓ Investigate the status of the implementation of infertility treatment leave across all industries and strengthen inspections
- ✓ Promote awareness of infertility in the working environment
- ✓ Extend the length of infertility treatment leave and strengthen paid leave for infertility treatment
- ✓ Support the fragmented use of infertility treatment leave and review the potential use of antenatal leave for infertility treatment
- ✓ Review the efficacy of introducing long-term infertility treatment leave (Including infertility treatment as a legitimate reason for long-term sick leave as allowed in the 「State Public Officials Act」)





**For more details,  
go to the KWDI website, to Publications, and then to KWDI Issue Papers.**



#### Abstract

### Gender cognitive analysis and improvement tasks for infertile couple support policy in South Korea

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The Infertility Couple Support Policy, which began in 2006 as part of the national population countermeasures in the era of low fertility rates, has steadily expanded the scope of applicants and projects over the past 16 years. In particular, in 2017, infertility procedures were applied to the National Health Insurance, and the transition to universal welfare was also made. As a result, the number of children born through the government's policy to support infertile couples has been steadily increasing, exceeding 10% of all newborns last year. It is evaluated that this policy contributes to promoting the reproductive rights of infertile couples who want