

## Effect of Infertility on Stress Coping Strategies among Women

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### ABSTRACT

Infertility may be a disease of the reproductive and genital system which affects men and women both with almost equal frequency. Stress coping strategies is to make master, tolerate, reduce or minimize the effects of stressors. They can include both behavioral strategies and psychological strategies. Infertility affects millions of people of reproductive age worldwide and has an impact on their families and communities. Estimates suggest that between 48 million couples and 186 million individuals live with infertility globally. Objective is to compare fertile and infertile women in terms of stress coping strategies. The sample was comprised of 100 subject (N=100) age ranging from 25 to 40. Sample was drawn from different locations of Bihar. Purposive cum incidental sampling methods was used for the selection of the sample. Stress coping strategies scale (SCSS-SKMSS) by Manish Kumar Sharma and Surbhi Sharma was used to collect information. Result of this study reveals that stress coping strategies of non-infertile women are better than infertile women.

**Keywords:** *Stress Coping Strategies, Infertile Women, Fertile Women*

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 60 to 80 million couples worldwide currently suffer from infertility. Infertility varies across regions of the world and is estimated to affect 8 to 12 per cent of couples worldwide. The WHO estimates the overall prevalence of primary infertility in India to be between 3.9 and 16.8 per cent. Infertility may be a disease of the reproductive and genital system which affects men and women both with almost equal frequency (Callahan, Caughey, 2008). In step with a study conducted by Neelofar and Tazeen in 2006 it absolutely was found that infertility affects between 60 million and 168 million people worldwide. Infertility could be a significant reason behind social and psychological distress to affected families thanks to the lack to realize the specified social role of fatherhood or motherhood (Greil AL, Slauson-Blevins K, McQuillan J. 2012).

Among working women nowadays infertility is increasing. Women who are goal-oriented and independent don't desire to urge married early in life and have children. Contraception strategies now enable sexual fulfillment before marriage and protect women from unwanted pregnancies. Moreover, long hours of labor in office and stress often result in infertility (Boivin, Jacky, Bunting, Collins & Nygren, 2007) Further, doctors believe that 'infertility causes stress, but stress doesn't cause infertility' (Akker, 2005).

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Coping strategies are processes during which someone tries to manage crisis stresses by them, and that they include any types of preventing coping strategies, problem focusing and emotions focusing. The rational result of using two quite preventive coping strategies is to balance the destructive effect of crisis on people's psychological conditions. It absolutely was believed that within the conditions of severe crisis, using emotional circuit strategies provides mental conditions for the people that specialize in the matter. Because the people also feel that they aren't ready to control the conditions; using the coping strategies focused on emotions will have a crucial role for balancing the stresses from crises.

The current study is an effort to explore and describe the experience of infertility, involuntary childlessness among women in Indian society. The most important thing is to identify that how women address infertility and involuntary childlessness and therefore the factors, which influence coping strategies together with the psychological well-being and quality of lifetime of the women that suffer from infertility. The experiences women get from infertility, influence their psychological well-being and quality of life. This study also seeks the association of infertility with psycho-social factors like age, and also the working status of women. In recent years, the number of couples seeking treatment for infertility has dramatically increased because of factors like postponement of childbearing in women, development of newer and advance techniques for infertility treatment and increasing awareness of accessible treatments. This research work is an endeavor check out psychological impact like psychological well-being, quality of life and stress coping strategies, of infertility in context with age, socio-economic status and dealing status of women.

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A study conducted by Audu, Ojua, Edem, Aerny in 2013, shows that men and ladies both were in disbelief after they found that they were infertile. Men and girls reacted differently to infertility, and this is often connected with family and community treatment.

Study conducted by Yazdani, Kazemi and Ureizi-Samani in 2016 found that there were negative association among self-blame and self-focused rumination coping strategies with attitude toward infertility in men and women.

Klemetti, Raitanen, Sihvo, Saarni and Koponen in 2010 indicated that the there were significantly poorer subjective quality of life in men who had experienced infertility (but not in perceived health, psychological distress or depressively) as compared with men without infertility.

#### *Objectives*

- To compare non-infertile and infertile women in terms of stress coping strategies.

#### *Hypothesis*

With the available literature and the objectives of the study in perspective, the following hypothesis had been formulated:

- Non-infertile women would have better stress coping strategies than infertile women.

#### *Methods*

The sample was comprised of 100 subjects (N=100) age ranging from 25 to 40. Sample was drawn from different hospitals and nursing homes of Bihar. Purposive cum incidental sampling methods was used for the selection of the sample.

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### Research Tools

- Stress coping strategies scale (SCSS-SKMSS): This scale was developed by Manish Kumar Sharma and Surbhi Sharma.

### Procedure

Proper permission was sought from concern authority for collecting data. Rapport was established and informed consent was taken from each participant before data collection. Ethical guidelines of APA were followed while working with human participants of the study.

The data was collected in 2 phases; In the 1st phase infertile women identified from different hospitals of Patna. Then respective data was collected from them. In the 2nd phase, a comparative sample of non-infertile women were selected and data was also collected from them too. SPSS was used for data handling and statistical analysis.

**Research design:** The between group design were applied in the present study.

## RESULTS

*Result Table 1: Showing descriptive (mean & SD) and inferential (t-ratio) of Stress coping strategies among non-infertile and infertile women*

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-test	Level of significance
Non-infertile women	50	129.72	17.44	2.95	0.01
Infertile women	50	111.32	17.77		

Result table 1 shows the mean score of fertile women is 129.72 and the mean score of infertile women is 111.32. The difference between the means is statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). Which means non infertile women have better stress coping strategy than infertile women.

Hence, hypothesis 1 which stated that “Non-infertile women would have better stress coping strategies than infertile women” had been accepted.

### Limitations

This study has various limitation: -

- Firstly, the sample size of infertile women is very small. With regard to high prevalence in infertility, future studies should survey a larger sample of people with diverse characteristics.
- Furthermore, there may be some other important variables such as religious belief which contributes to infertility stress. Thus, further studies should consider this.
- Finally, the present study didn't include men as a sample in research, therefore, future research also needs to investigate coping strategies among males with infertility problems.

## CONCLUSION

The result of the current study suggests that non-infertile women have better stress-coping strategies than infertile women. It infers that infertile women have issues while coping with stress. This study highlights the importance of improving the mental well-being of infertile women by improving stress-coping strategies. The clinical interventions for infertile persons may need to promote awareness about the usefulness of coping strategies.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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