

Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on depression and hopelessness in infertile women

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Abstract:

Introduction: COVID-19 has negative and sometimes irreversible effects on infertile women. This study aimed to investigate hopelessness and depression in infertile women whose treatment has been delayed due to COVID-19.

Methods: This case-control study was conducted online on 172 infertile women. The case group included infertile women under treatment whose treatment was delayed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the control group was selected from infertile women who were not under infertile treatment. This study was conducted between April and December 2021 in Jahrom, Iran. Beck hopelessness standard questionnaire (BHS) and Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) were used to collect data, and $p < 0.05$ was considered significant.

Results: The mean score of hopelessness in women in the case group was 9.48 ± 1.80 compared to the control group 8.66 ± 1.34 (OR = 1.39 95% CI = 1.13–1.71), and its areas (OR = 1.33 95% CI = 1.003–2.43), Emotions and expectations score (OR = 1.59 95% CI = 1.07–2.37), Motivation loss score (OR = 2.02 95% CI = 1.49–2.73), Hope score, and depression in women in the case group was 40.33 ± 10.87 to 36.72 ± 11.40 compared to the control (OR = 1.17 95% CI = 1.11–1.23). All these variables showed an increase in the case group compared to the control group ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: The results showed that infertile women whose treatment was delayed were more frustrated and depressed than women in the control group. COVID-19 epidemic and discontinuation of infertile treatments in infertile women seem to have negative psychological effects. Therefore, the psychological effects of this epidemic on infertile women should not be ignored, so planners should put social and family support at the top of the program.

Keywords: Sterility, psychological impact, COVID-19 pandemic, mental health, anxiety, deprivation