

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN COGNITIVE EMOTION REGULATION STRATEGIES AND DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY IN INFERTILE WOMEN

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BACKGROUND-AIM: Infertility is a significant psychosocial stressor for women. Cognitive emotion regulation strategies may shape perceptions of this process and emotional responses; therefore, this study examined their relationship with depression and anxiety levels in infertile women.

METHODS: This study included 64 infertile women who attended the Pamukkale University In Vitro Fertilization Center and completed the sociodemographic information form, the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ), the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), and the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI). Inclusion criteria were a diagnosis of infertility, age ≥ 18 , literacy, and voluntary participation. Exclusion criteria included age < 18 , refusal to participate, severe psychiatric disorders (e.g., psychotic or bipolar disorders, substance dependence, dementia, or psychotic depression), significant medical or neurological illness, intellectual disability, physical or neurological conditions that impair communication, and illiteracy. Psychotropic medication use was recorded. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the university ethics committee (E-60116787-020-811463).

RESULTS: The mean age of the participants was 30.11 ± 4.45 years, and the mean duration of marriage was 4.73 ± 2.92 years. The rate of receiving psychological support was 4.7%; 35.9% reported that they would like to receive support, while 59.4% stated that they did not wish to receive psychological help. The mean BDI score was 8.85 ± 7.80 , and the mean BAI score was 11.45 ± 9.69 . Age was positively associated only with the acceptance and blaming others subscales. BDI scores were positively correlated with self-blame, rumination, catastrophizing, and blaming others, whereas BAI scores were positively correlated with self-blame, rumination, and catastrophizing.

CONCLUSION: Consistent with the literature, depression and anxiety levels in infertile women are associated with maladaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies. In particular, self-blame, rumination, and catastrophizing were significantly linked to both depression and anxiety. The association between age and certain strategies suggests that coping patterns may change across the lifespan.

Keywords: Infertility, emotion regulation, depression, anxiety