

Infertility: the impact of stress, the benefit of counseling

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Infertility patients have been called the "most neglected silent minority" because they have a loss that often goes unnoticed. In addition, they face many other often unnoticed stresses, such as the difficulties of going to work while undergoing infertility testing and treatments, the fear caused by newspaper reports of possible increased risk of cancer with ovulation agents, or the ethical problems of facilities implanting the wrong embryos. Even if successful, they may continue to consider themselves "infertile", often not buying baby clothes or making preparations during their pregnancy. And if therapies do not work, they often drop out of treatment without closure or support. For all of these reasons, the author recommends a psychologist as part of an infertility team, for individual counseling as well as behavioral advice on relaxation training, stress management, and nutritional and exercise counseling.