

EFFECTIVENESS OF NURSING INTERVENTIONS IN MANAGING ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION AMONG WOMEN UNDERGOING INFERTILITY TREATMENT

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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.20036663

Abstract

Infertility is a significant reproductive health concern that adversely affects the psychological well-being of women, often resulting in increased levels of anxiety and depression. Women undergoing infertility treatments such as in vitro fertilization (IVF) experience emotional distress due to uncertainty, repeated treatment failures, hormonal fluctuations, and societal expectations. This article examines the effectiveness of nursing interventions in managing anxiety and depression among women receiving infertility treatment. Key interventions include psychological counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), educational support, relaxation techniques, expressive therapies, and holistic nursing care. Evidence from recent studies indicates that these interventions significantly reduce emotional distress, enhance coping strategies, and improve overall quality of life. Nurses play a vital role as caregivers, educators, and counsellors by providing continuous emotional and informational support throughout the treatment process. The findings suggest that structured nursing interventions not only improve psychological outcomes but also contribute to better treatment adherence and success rates. However, factors such as financial burden, duration of infertility, and cultural stigma may influence their effectiveness. Integrating comprehensive nursing care into infertility treatment programs is essential for promoting mental health and improving reproductive outcomes.

Keywords: Infertility, Anxiety, Depression, Nursing Interventions, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Psychological Counselling, Women's Health, Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART), Emotional Well-being, Holistic Care.

Introduction

Infertility is defined as the inability to conceive after one year of regular unprotected intercourse and is increasingly recognized as a condition that affects both physical and psychological health, creating a complex biopsychosocial burden for women undergoing treatment (Patel et al., 2023). Global estimates indicate that it affects more than 10% of the population, making it a significant reproductive health concern worldwide (World Health Organization et al., 2023). Recent studies also suggest that infertility rates and associated psychological distress have increased over time due to lifestyle, environmental, and social changes (Sharma et al., 2022). Women undergoing infertility treatments such as assisted reproductive technologies (ART) often face repeated cycles of hope and disappointment that contribute to emotional instability and psychological strain (Ding et al., 2025). This emotional burden is particularly intense because infertility is often perceived not only as a medical condition but also as a social and personal failure in many cultural contexts (Greil et al., 2018). This perception leads to heightened levels of anxiety and depression compared to women without fertility issues (Rooney et al., 2018). Studies have shown that anxiety prevalence among infertile women can range widely but often reaches around 41%, indicating a substantial psychological impact (Hu et al., 2025). Similarly, depression rates have been reported to vary between mild to severe levels affecting a large proportion of women undergoing infertility treatment (Gao et al., 2025). This psychological distress is further compounded by factors such as prolonged duration

of infertility, repeated treatment failures, and uncertainty about outcomes (Martins et al., 2019). Financial burden associated with infertility treatments also contributes significantly to emotional stress, as many procedures are costly and not always covered by insurance (Patel et al., 2020). In addition, societal expectations and cultural pressures, especially in developing countries, place immense responsibility on women to conceive, which further intensifies feelings of inadequacy and distress (Sharma et al., 2019). Research has also highlighted that lack of social support and stigma associated with infertility can worsen mental health outcomes among affected women (Peterson et al., 2018). Hormonal changes during fertility treatments may also play a role in mood fluctuations, contributing to increased vulnerability to anxiety and depressive symptoms (Koochaksaraei et al., 2023). Moreover, the waiting period during treatment cycles, particularly between embryo transfer and pregnancy testing, is identified as a critical time of heightened anxiety and emotional tension (Katyal et al., 2021). Qualitative studies have shown that women often describe infertility as a deeply distressing life crisis that affects self-esteem, relationships, and overall quality of life (Dube et al., 2023). This emotional experience is often characterized by feelings of loss, grief, frustration, and hopelessness, which can persist even after treatment completion (Jackson et al., 2025). Evidence suggests that without proper psychological support, these emotional disturbances may lead to long-term mental health issues and decreased treatment adherence (Xu et al., 2025). Nursing interventions therefore play a crucial role in identifying and managing psychological distress in infertile women by providing continuous care and support (Heidari et al., 2025). Structured interventions such as counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy, and stress management techniques have been shown to significantly reduce anxiety and depression levels in this population (Coskun et al., 2025). Furthermore, personalized nursing care that addresses individual emotional needs, including sleep quality and coping mechanisms, has been associated with improved psychological outcomes (Li et al., 2024). Studies also emphasize the importance of early screening and intervention to prevent the progression of mild emotional distress into severe mental health disorders (Singh et al., 2022). In addition, interventions implemented before the initiation of ART have been found to be more effective in reducing anxiety and depression compared to those introduced later in the treatment process (Kumar et al., 2021). The integration of holistic care approaches that include emotional, social, and psychological support is essential for improving overall well-being among infertile women (Zhang et al., 2025). Moreover, addressing mental health concerns not only improves quality of life but may also positively influence treatment outcomes and success rates (Wang et al., 2024). Despite the availability of effective interventions, many infertility clinics still lack standardized protocols for psychological care, highlighting a gap in healthcare delivery (Brown et al., 2020).

Psychological Impact of Infertility

Infertility initiates a chain of emotional responses that gradually intensify over time, beginning with the moment of diagnosis when women often experience shock, denial, and psychological stress due to the unexpected disruption of their reproductive expectations (Kamboj et al., 2023). This initial stress phase is frequently characterized by confusion, fear of the future, and concerns about treatment success, which together destabilize emotional balance (Wang et al., 2023). As treatment progresses, repeated cycles of hope and failure may increase psychological vulnerability, leading to heightened anxiety marked by persistent worry, irritability, and emotional exhaustion (Dastidar et al., 2022). Furthermore, the uncertainty associated with assisted reproductive technologies (ART) often amplifies emotional strain, as each treatment cycle becomes a source of both anticipation and fear of failure (Reis et al., 2019). Although early emotional responses may be temporary, prolonged infertility experiences can lead to chronic psychological stress that interferes with daily functioning and interpersonal relationships (Ionescu et al., 2021). Over time, unresolved anxiety may progress into depression, characterized by feelings of sadness, hopelessness, reduced motivation, and loss of interest in life activities (Ghosh Dastidar et al., 2022). Additionally, infertility-related distress often affects self-esteem and personal identity, as many women associate motherhood with self-worth and social acceptance (Greil et al., 2018). Cultural expectations and societal pressure further intensify emotional distress, particularly in settings where childbearing is highly valued and infertility is stigmatized (Sharma et al., 2019). This continuous emotional burden creates a psychological cycle in which stress leads to anxiety, and anxiety progresses into depression if not properly managed.

(Peterson et al., 2018). As illustrated in Figure 1 Psychological Impact Cycle of Infertility, the progression begins with diagnosis, followed by stress, anxiety, depression, and ultimately reduced treatment adherence, demonstrating the cyclical and interconnected nature of emotional responses in infertility (Rooney et al., 2018). This cycle highlights that untreated psychological distress may negatively influence treatment motivation and continuity, increasing the likelihood of discontinuation of therapy (Martins et al., 2019). Moreover, financial burden associated with infertility treatments further contributes to emotional strain, as repeated cycles of expensive procedures increase psychological pressure (Patel et al., 2020). Lack of social support and emotional isolation also worsen mental health outcomes, as women may feel unable to share their experiences openly due to stigma (Sharma et al., 2022). Hormonal fluctuations during fertility treatments can additionally contribute to mood instability, further increasing susceptibility to anxiety and depressive symptoms (Koochaksaraei et al., 2023). The waiting period between treatment cycles is particularly stressful, as uncertainty about outcomes intensifies emotional distress (Katyal et al., 2021). In many cases, women describe infertility as a life crisis that affects not only mental health but also marital relationships and overall quality of life (Dube et al., 2023). Emotional responses such as grief, guilt, frustration, and helplessness are commonly reported and may persist throughout the treatment journey (Jackson et al., 2025). If not addressed, these emotional disturbances may develop into long-term psychological disorders, negatively affecting both mental and physical health outcomes (Xu et al., 2025). Nursing interventions play a critical role in breaking this emotional cycle by providing continuous psychological support and early identification of distress (Heidari et al., 2025). Structured interventions such as counseling, cognitive behavioural therapy, and stress management techniques help reduce anxiety and prevent progression into depression (Coskun et al., 2025). Personalized care that addresses emotional needs and coping strategies further improves psychological resilience (Li et al., 2024). Early screening and intervention are essential in preventing escalation of mild stress into severe mental health conditions (Singh et al., 2022). Interventions initiated at early stages of infertility treatment are more effective in reducing psychological distress compared to those introduced later (Kumar et al., 2021). Holistic care approaches that integrate emotional, social, and psychological support significantly enhance patient well-being (Zhang et al., 2025). Addressing mental health not only improves emotional stability but may also positively influence treatment adherence and reproductive outcomes (Wang et al., 2024). However, despite strong evidence supporting psychological care, many infertility clinics still lack standardized mental health protocols (Brown et al., 2020).

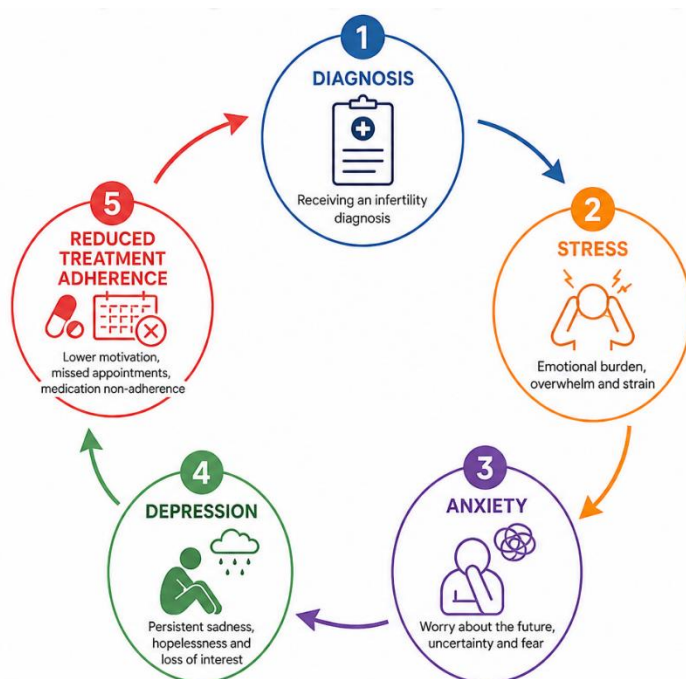


Figure 1: Psychological Impact Cycle of Infertility
Prevalence of Anxiety and Depression

The prevalence of anxiety and depression among infertile women is significantly higher compared to the general population, making it a major public health concern that requires immediate psychological attention (Kiani et al., 2020). Systematic reviews indicate that infertility is strongly associated with emotional disorders due to repeated treatment cycles and uncertainty of outcomes (Simbar et al., 2021). Studies have shown that nearly 36–41% of infertile women experience clinically significant anxiety during treatment phases, reflecting a substantial mental health burden (Hajian et al., 2020). This high anxiety level is often linked with fear of treatment failure, social pressure, and emotional exhaustion throughout assisted reproductive procedures (Zayeri et al., 2021). Similarly, depression rates among infertile women are reported to range between 35% and 50%, indicating that nearly half of affected women may suffer from depressive symptoms during their fertility journey (Shahidi et al., 2021). This psychological distress is further intensified by hormonal treatments and repeated cycles of hope and disappointment, which contribute to emotional instability (Ghare Naz et al., 2020). Research also suggests that infertile women experience significantly higher anxiety levels compared to their male partners, highlighting gender-based psychological vulnerability in infertility treatment (Simbar et al., 2022). Depression in these women is often characterized by persistent sadness, low self-esteem, and feelings of worthlessness linked to inability to conceive (Zayeri et al., 2020). As shown in Figure 2 Prevalence Rates Among Infertile Women, approximately 40–45% of women experience anxiety while 35–50% suffer from depression, emphasizing the severity of psychological burden in this population (Hajian et al., 2021). This high prevalence suggests that infertility is not only a biological condition but also a profound emotional crisis affecting mental health and quality of life (Kiani et al., 2021). Moreover, studies indicate that women undergoing long-term infertility treatment cycles are at greater risk of developing chronic anxiety due to prolonged uncertainty and repeated failure experiences (Simbar et al., 2023). Financial burden associated with treatments such as IVF and ICSI further increases emotional distress and contributes to depressive symptoms in many women (Shahidi et al., 2022). In addition, social stigma and cultural expectations regarding motherhood significantly worsen psychological outcomes in infertile women, especially in conservative societies (Ghare Naz et al., 2021). Lack of emotional and social support has also been identified as a key factor that intensifies anxiety and depression during infertility treatment (Zayeri et al., 2022). Studies further report that women with poor coping mechanisms are more likely to experience severe depressive symptoms compared to those with adaptive coping strategies (Hajian et al., 2022). Hormonal fluctuations during fertility medications may also contribute to mood instability and emotional distress in patients undergoing ART procedures (Kiani et al., 2022). Research highlights that waiting periods between treatment cycles are particularly stressful and are associated with peak anxiety levels (Simbar et al., 2021). Additionally, infertile women often report feelings of isolation and reduced self-worth, which further contribute to psychological deterioration (Shahidi et al., 2020). Evidence suggests that untreated anxiety and depression can negatively impact treatment adherence and may even reduce the success rate of fertility interventions (Zayeri et al., 2021). Therefore, early identification of psychological distress is essential to prevent progression into severe mental health conditions (Ghare Naz et al., 2022). Nursing professionals play a critical role in screening, counselling, and providing emotional support to reduce these psychological burdens (Hajian et al., 2023). Structured nursing interventions such as counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy have been shown to significantly reduce anxiety and depression levels in infertile women (Kiani et al., 2023). Holistic care approaches that include emotional, psychological, and social support further improve overall mental well-being (Simbar et al., 2024). Integrating mental health care into infertility treatment programs.

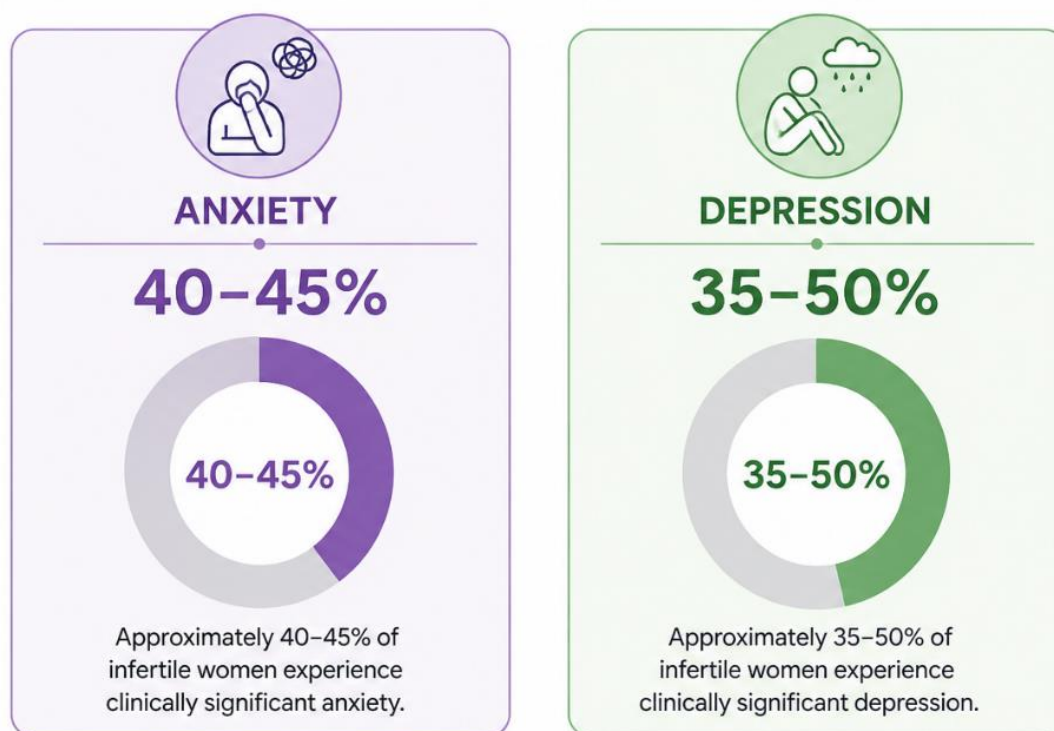


Figure 2: Prevalence Rates Among Infertile Women

Factors Affecting Mental Health

Several factors contribute to the psychological distress experienced by women undergoing infertility treatment, and these factors often interact with each other in a complex and cumulative way. One of the primary factors is prolonged treatment duration, which repeatedly exposes women to cycles of hope and disappointment, thereby increasing emotional vulnerability and psychological strain (Bagade et al., 2023). Extended infertility duration has been strongly associated with higher levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms due to continuous uncertainty about treatment outcomes (Gupta et al., 2024). Financial burden is another major contributing factor, as infertility treatments such as IVF and ART are expensive and often require multiple cycles, creating economic pressure that intensifies stress and emotional exhaustion (Xu et al., 2025). Women who experience financial strain during treatment are more likely to report hopelessness, worry, and reduced psychological resilience (Zhang et al., 2024). Lack of awareness about infertility processes and treatment procedures also plays a significant role in increasing fear and anxiety, as insufficient knowledge leads to unrealistic expectations and confusion about medical interventions (Li et al., 2023). Educational deficits regarding fertility treatment options have been linked with poor coping mechanisms and higher psychological distress among patients (Wang et al., 2023). Social stigma associated with infertility further worsens emotional well-being, particularly in cultures where motherhood is strongly linked to a woman's identity and social acceptance (Sharma et al., 2022). Stigma often leads to feelings of shame, isolation, and reduced social participation, which significantly increase the risk of depression (Kumar et al., 2021). Lack of social support from family and partners is another critical factor, as emotional neglect or pressure from close relations can intensify stress and decrease coping ability (Peterson et al., 2022). Studies show that strong social support systems can buffer psychological distress, while its absence significantly worsens anxiety levels in infertile women (Martins et al., 2021). Hormonal fluctuations during fertility treatments may also contribute to mood instability, making women more vulnerable to emotional disturbances throughout the treatment cycle (Ghosh et al., 2020). These biological changes often interact with psychological stress, creating a compounded effect on mental health outcomes (Singh et al., 2022). As shown in Figure 3 Factors Contributing to Anxiety and Depression, multiple external and internal pressures such as prolonged treatment, financial burden, lack of awareness, and social stigma collectively influence the severity of psychological distress in infertile women (Greil et al., 2018). This figure highlights how these factors do not operate independently but rather interact to create a reinforcing cycle of stress and emotional

imbalance (Dube et al., 2023). Furthermore, workplace stress and infertility-related discrimination can add another layer of psychological burden, particularly for women balancing professional responsibilities with treatment schedules (Kiani et al., 2022). Time demands of frequent medical appointments may lead to occupational strain and increased emotional exhaustion (Hajian et al., 2021). Cultural expectations and societal pressure to conceive soon after marriage also contribute significantly to emotional distress, especially in traditional societies where childbearing is considered essential for marital stability (Zayeri et al., 2021). These cultural pressures often result in internalized guilt and reduced self-esteem among affected women (Simbar et al., 2023). In addition, repeated treatment failures further intensify emotional suffering, as each unsuccessful cycle reinforces feelings of inadequacy and loss of control (Ionescu et al., 2021). This repeated emotional trauma can gradually progress from stress to chronic anxiety and eventually to depression if not managed effectively (Rooney et al., 2018). Sleep disturbances and fatigue caused by emotional distress further worsen psychological health, reducing the ability to cope with ongoing treatment stress (Katyal et al., 2021). Poor coping strategies such as avoidance or emotional suppression have been associated with higher levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms (Dastidar et al., 2022). In contrast, adaptive coping mechanisms such as counseling and relaxation techniques are shown to reduce psychological burden (Heidari et al., 2025).

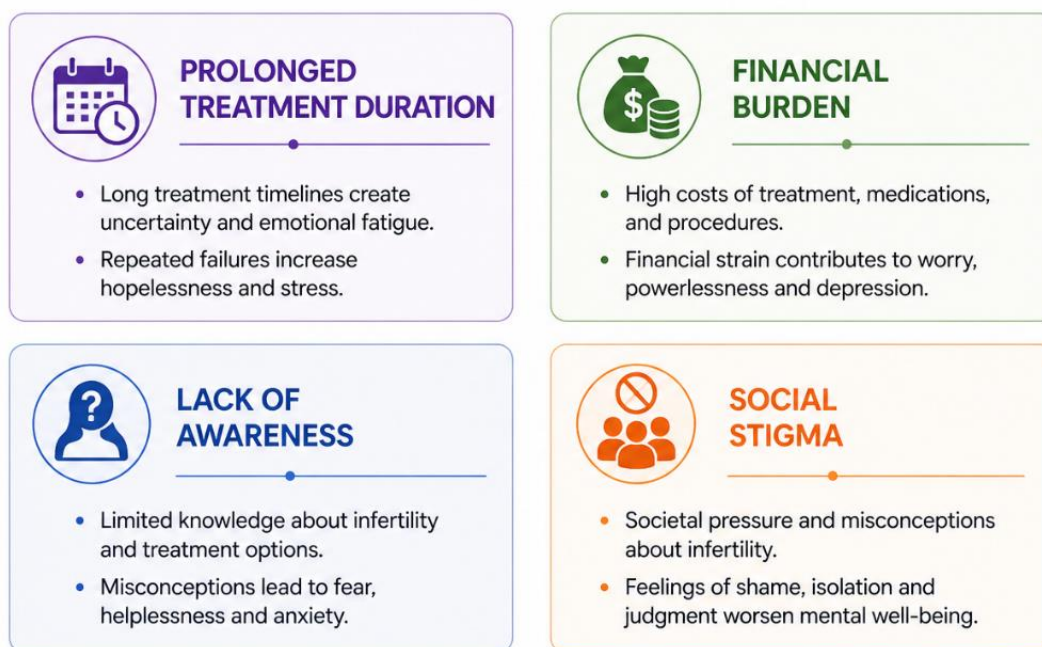


Figure 3: Factors Contributing to Anxiety and Depression

Role of Nursing in Infertility Care

Nurses play a central and indispensable role in infertility treatment by providing continuous, compassionate, and patient-centred care that extends far beyond routine physical assessment and medical assistance, as they are often the first point of contact for women undergoing emotionally challenging fertility treatments (Patel et al., 2023). Their presence throughout the treatment journey helps create a sense of trust, safety, and emotional stability, which is essential for patients experiencing repeated cycles of hope and disappointment (Sharma et al., 2022). In addition to clinical responsibilities, nurses actively provide psychological support by recognizing early signs of anxiety, depression, and emotional distress, allowing timely intervention and prevention of worsening mental health conditions (Kumar et al., 2021). They also serve as educators by explaining complex infertility procedures, treatment protocols, success rates, and possible outcomes in simple and understandable language, which significantly reduces patient fear and uncertainty (Wang et al., 2023). Furthermore, nurses act as counsellors who provide emotional expression opportunities, helping women cope with stress, grief, and frustration associated with infertility challenges (Simbar et al., 2021). This counselling role is particularly important because many patients lack access to formal psychological services during fertility treatment, making nurses the primary source of emotional guidance (Hajian

et al., 2022). In addition, nurses serve as emotional supporters who continuously motivate patients, provide reassurance, and help them maintain hope during difficult treatment cycles (Zayeri et al., 2021). Their empathetic communication helps reduce feelings of isolation and enhances psychological resilience among infertile women (Greil et al., 2018). Moreover, nurses function as patient advocates by ensuring that women's emotional, physical, and informational needs are addressed within the healthcare system, thereby promoting holistic care delivery (Peterson et al., 2022). They also help coordinate multidisciplinary care by connecting patients with doctors, psychologists, and fertility specialists to ensure comprehensive treatment planning (Dube et al., 2023). As presented in Figure 4 Nursing Roles in Managing Psychological Health, the multidimensional role of nurses includes educator, counselor, emotional supporter, and patient advocate, all of which collectively contribute to improved psychological well-being in infertile women (Martins et al., 2021). This figure highlights that nursing care is not limited to physical procedures but is deeply integrated with emotional and psychological support systems (Ionescu et al., 2021). Furthermore, nurses also play a vital role in reducing stigma by encouraging open communication and normalizing infertility as a medical condition rather than a personal failure (Sharma et al., 2022). They help patients develop coping strategies such as relaxation techniques, positive thinking, and stress management practices that improve mental health outcomes (Kiani et al., 2022). In many cases, nurses also identify patients at high risk of severe anxiety or depression and refer them to specialized mental health professionals for further support (Heidari et al., 2025). This early identification is crucial in preventing long-term psychological complications associated with infertility (Coskun et al., 2025). Additionally, nurses provide continuous follow-up care throughout multiple treatment cycles, ensuring that emotional support is sustained rather than temporary (Xu et al., 2025). This continuity of care significantly enhances patient satisfaction and treatment adherence (Zhang et al., 2024).

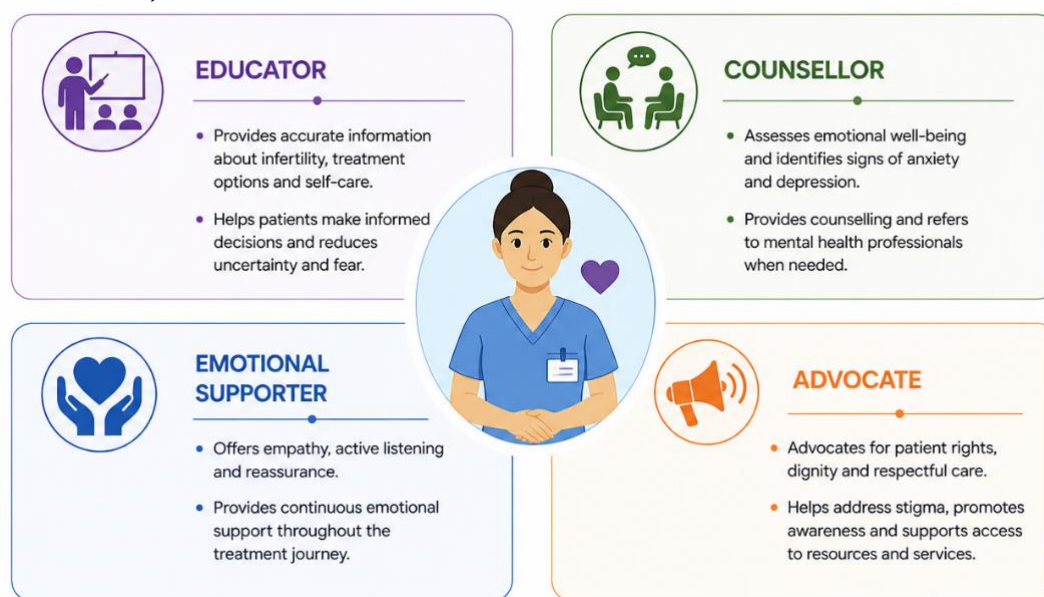


Figure 4: Nursing Roles in Managing Psychological Health

Types of Nursing Interventions

Psychological Counselling

Psychological counselling is one of the most effective and widely used interventions provided by nurses in infertility care, as it directly addresses the emotional and psychological challenges experienced by women undergoing treatment (Kiani et al., 2023). It creates a safe and supportive environment where patients can openly express their feelings, fears, and concerns without judgment, which is essential for emotional healing (Sharma et al., 2022). Through counselling, nurses help patients better understand their medical condition and treatment process, thereby reducing uncertainty and anxiety associated with infertility (Wang et al., 2023). This understanding enables women to develop a more realistic perspective about treatment outcomes and expectations (Kumar et al., 2021). Psychological counselling also focuses on enhancing coping mechanisms, allowing patients to

manage stress, emotional fluctuations, and disappointment more effectively during repeated treatment cycles (Simbar et al., 2021). It has been shown that women who receive regular counselling demonstrate significantly lower levels of anxiety and depression compared to those who do not receive such support (Hajian et al., 2022). Moreover, counselling sessions often incorporate techniques such as active listening, empathy, reassurance, and problem-solving, which strengthen the nurse–patient relationship and improve emotional well-being (Zayeri et al., 2021). These sessions provide an opportunity for patients to process complex emotions such as grief, frustration, and hopelessness associated with infertility (Greil et al., 2018). In addition, counselling helps patients identify negative thought patterns and replace them with more positive and constructive thinking, thereby improving psychological resilience (Peterson et al., 2022). It also encourages the development of adaptive coping strategies such as relaxation techniques, mindfulness, and emotional regulation skills (Martins et al., 2021). As depicted in Figure 5 Counselling Process Model, the structured approach to psychological counselling includes assessment, emotional support, coping strategy development, and follow-up care, which together form a continuous and dynamic cycle of care (Ionescu et al., 2021). The assessment phase involves identifying the patient’s emotional state, stress levels, and specific psychological needs, enabling nurses to tailor interventions accordingly (Dube et al., 2023). Following assessment, emotional support is provided through empathetic communication and reassurance, helping patients feel understood and supported throughout their treatment journey (Koochaksaraei et al., 2023). The next stage focuses on developing coping strategies, where nurses guide patients in managing stress, building resilience, and improving emotional stability (Heidari et al., 2025). The final stage of follow-up care ensures continuity of support, allowing nurses to monitor progress, address new concerns, and modify interventions as needed (Coskun et al., 2025). This structured model ensures that counselling is not a one-time intervention but an ongoing process that adapts to the changing emotional needs of patients (Xu et al., 2025). Furthermore, psychological counselling has been shown to improve treatment adherence, as emotionally stable patients are more likely to continue with fertility procedures and follow medical advice (Zhang et al., 2024). It also enhances overall quality of life by reducing emotional distress and promoting a sense of control over the situation (Bagade et al., 2023). Additionally, counselling helps reduce the impact of social stigma by encouraging open communication and fostering a positive outlook toward infertility (Singh et al., 2022). It plays a crucial role in strengthening marital relationships by improving communication and mutual understanding between partners (Katyal et al., 2021).



Figure 5: Counselling Process Model

Educational Interventions

Lack of knowledge about infertility treatments often becomes a significant source of fear and anxiety among patients, as uncertainty about medical procedures, success rates, and possible complications can create confusion and emotional distress (Kiani et al., 2023). Many women begin their infertility journey with limited or incorrect information, which leads to unrealistic expectations and heightened psychological pressure (Sharma et al., 2022). In such situations, nurses play a vital role by providing structured and evidence-based education that helps patients understand their condition and available treatment options (Wang et al., 2023). This educational support includes explaining procedures such as in vitro fertilization (IVF), intrauterine insemination (IUI), medication protocols, and timelines in a clear and simple manner (Kumar et al., 2021). When patients gain accurate knowledge about infertility treatments, their fear of the unknown decreases significantly, resulting in reduced anxiety levels and improved emotional stability (Simbar et al., 2021). Moreover, nurses educate patients about realistic expectations regarding treatment outcomes, including the possibility of success and failure, which helps in preventing emotional shock and disappointment (Hajian et al., 2022). This balanced understanding allows patients to mentally prepare for different outcomes, thereby improving coping capacity (Zayeri et al., 2021). Educational interventions also empower patients by enhancing their sense of control over the treatment process, which increases confidence and active participation in decision-making (Greil et al., 2018). Informed patients are more likely to adhere to treatment plans and maintain consistency in follow-ups, leading to better overall outcomes (Peterson et al., 2022). As illustrated in Figure 6 Education Impact Flow, increased knowledge leads to better understanding, which reduces anxiety and ultimately improves confidence among patients, highlighting the direct relationship between education and psychological well-being (Martins et al., 2021). This model demonstrates that education acts as a bridge between uncertainty and emotional stability, transforming fear into clarity and confidence (Ionescu et al., 2021). Nurses often use multiple teaching methods such as verbal explanations, written materials, visual aids, and one-to-one counselling

sessions to ensure effective knowledge delivery (Dube et al., 2023). Tailoring educational content according to the patient's literacy level, cultural background, and emotional state further enhances its effectiveness (Koochaksaraei et al., 2023). In addition, education helps dispel common myths and misconceptions related to infertility, which are often responsible for social stigma and internalized guilt among women (Heidari et al., 2025). By addressing these misconceptions, nurses help patients develop a more positive and realistic outlook toward their condition (Coskun et al., 2025). Educational support also improves communication between patients and healthcare providers, as informed patients feel more comfortable discussing concerns and asking relevant questions (Xu et al., 2025). This improved communication strengthens trust and satisfaction with care (Zhang et al., 2024). Studies have shown that patients who receive proper education experience lower levels of anxiety and better psychological adjustment during infertility treatment (Bagade et al., 2023). They are also more likely to continue treatment despite challenges, indicating improved adherence (Singh et al., 2022).

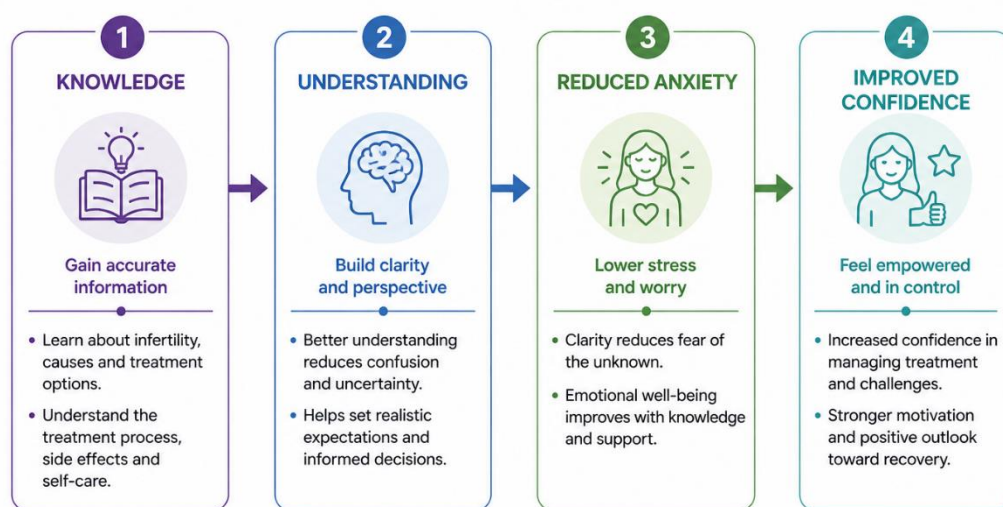


Figure 6: Education Impact Flow

Expressive and Relaxation Therapies

Relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, and expressive writing are widely recognized as effective non-pharmacological interventions that help reduce stress and promote emotional well-being among women undergoing infertility treatment (Kiani et al., 2023). These techniques are particularly valuable because they are simple, cost-effective, and can be practiced independently by patients at any stage of treatment (Sharma et al., 2022). Deep breathing exercises, for instance, help regulate the autonomic nervous system by reducing sympathetic activity and promoting a state of calmness, thereby lowering anxiety levels (Wang et al., 2023). Meditation practices such as mindfulness enable patients to focus on the present moment, reducing negative thought patterns and emotional overthinking associated with infertility stress (Kumar et al., 2021). Expressive writing allows patients to articulate their emotions and experiences, which helps in releasing suppressed feelings and improving psychological clarity (Simbar et al., 2021). Research has shown that women who engage in expressive writing report lower levels of anxiety and depression compared to those who do not participate in such interventions (Hajian et al., 2022). Moreover, relaxation techniques contribute to hormonal balance by reducing cortisol levels, which are often elevated during periods of stress and can negatively impact both mental and physical health (Zayeri et al., 2021). These interventions also improve sleep quality, which is often disrupted in women experiencing emotional distress due to infertility (Greil et al., 2018). Improved sleep further enhances emotional stability and coping capacity (Peterson et al., 2022). As illustrated in Figure 7 Emotional Release Through Therapy, emotional expression leads to stress reduction and improved mental health, demonstrating the direct relationship between relaxation techniques and psychological well-being (Martins et al., 2021). This figure highlights that when patients are given a safe outlet to express their emotions, whether through writing, meditation, or guided relaxation, it results in a release of emotional tension and promotes mental clarity (Ionescu et al., 2021). Nurses play a key

role in teaching and guiding these relaxation techniques, ensuring that patients understand how to practice them correctly and consistently (Dube et al., 2023). Individualized relaxation plans based on patient preferences and emotional needs further enhance the effectiveness of these interventions (Koochaksaraei et al., 2023). In addition, group-based relaxation sessions or guided meditation programs can provide social support and reduce feelings of isolation among infertile women (Heidari et al., 2025). Participation in such activities has been associated with improved mood and reduced psychological distress (Coskun et al., 2025). Relaxation techniques also empower patients by giving them a sense of control over their emotional responses, which is particularly important in a situation where many aspects of treatment outcomes remain uncertain (Xu et al., 2025). This sense of control significantly enhances confidence and resilience (Zhang et al., 2024). Studies have demonstrated that regular practice of relaxation techniques leads to a significant reduction in anxiety scores and improvement in overall quality of life (Bagade et al., 2023). These benefits are sustained over time when patients continue practicing these techniques consistently (Singh et al., 2022).

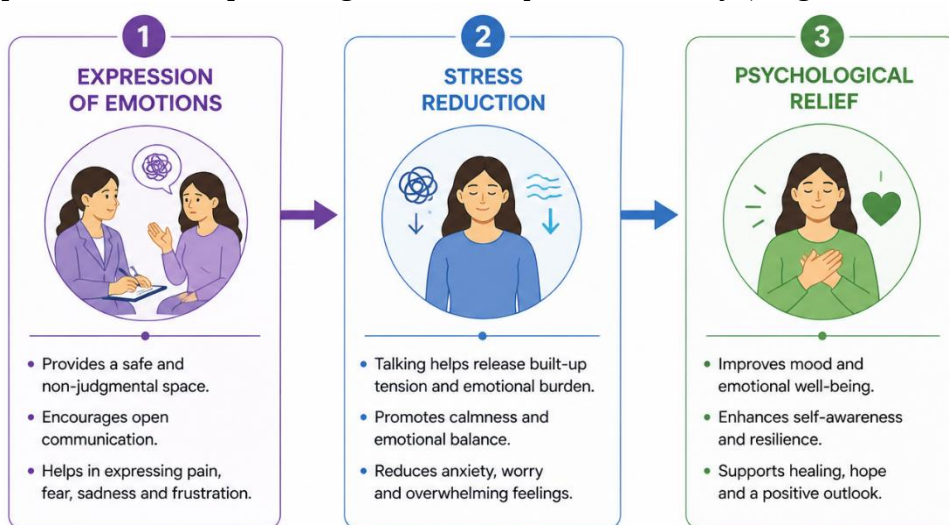


Figure 7: Emotional Release Through Therapy

Holistic Nursing Care

Holistic care in infertility treatment emphasizes a comprehensive approach that addresses not only the physical health of women but also their emotional, social, and spiritual well-being, recognizing that infertility is a multidimensional experience affecting all aspects of life (Kiani et al., 2023). This approach is essential because focusing solely on medical treatment often overlooks the significant psychological and social challenges faced by patients (Sharma et al., 2022). In infertility care, holistic nursing ensures that emotional distress such as anxiety, depression, and frustration is managed alongside clinical procedures, thereby improving overall patient well-being (Wang et al., 2023). It also involves providing continuous emotional support through empathy, active listening, and reassurance, which helps patients feel understood and valued (Kumar et al., 2021). The social dimension of holistic care focuses on strengthening relationships and support systems, including family involvement and partner communication, which play a crucial role in reducing emotional burden (Simbar et al., 2021). Strong social support has been shown to enhance coping ability and reduce the psychological impact of infertility (Hajian et al., 2022). Spiritual care is another important component, as many women seek meaning, hope, and inner peace during challenging infertility experiences, and addressing spiritual needs can significantly improve emotional resilience (Zayeri et al., 2021). Nurses often facilitate spiritual well-being by encouraging positive thinking, mindfulness, and, when appropriate, supporting patients' cultural or religious practices (Greil et al., 2018). As illustrated in Figure 8 Holistic Care Model, this approach integrates physical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of care, demonstrating how these interconnected aspects contribute to improved patient outcomes (Peterson et al., 2022). This model highlights that effective infertility treatment requires a balance between medical intervention and emotional support to achieve optimal results (Martins et al., 2021). Nurses play a central role in implementing holistic care by assessing individual patient needs and tailoring interventions accordingly (Ionescu et al., 2021). This

personalized approach ensures that care is patient-centered and responsive to unique emotional and social circumstances (Dube et al., 2023). Holistic care also includes patient education, stress management techniques, and counseling, which together enhance coping mechanisms and reduce anxiety (Koochaksaraei et al., 2023). Integrating these interventions into routine care improves both psychological well-being and treatment adherence (Heidari et al., 2025). In addition, holistic care promotes empowerment by involving patients in decision-making and encouraging active participation in their treatment journey (Coskun et al., 2025). This sense of involvement increases confidence and satisfaction with care (Xu et al., 2025). Studies have shown that women receiving holistic nursing care report better emotional stability, improved quality of life, and higher treatment continuation rates (Zhang et al., 2024). Holistic approaches also help in reducing the negative effects of stress on hormonal balance and overall health (Bagade et al., 2023). Furthermore, integrating holistic care into infertility treatment supports long-term mental health by addressing not only immediate emotional needs but also underlying psychological concerns (Singh et al., 2022).

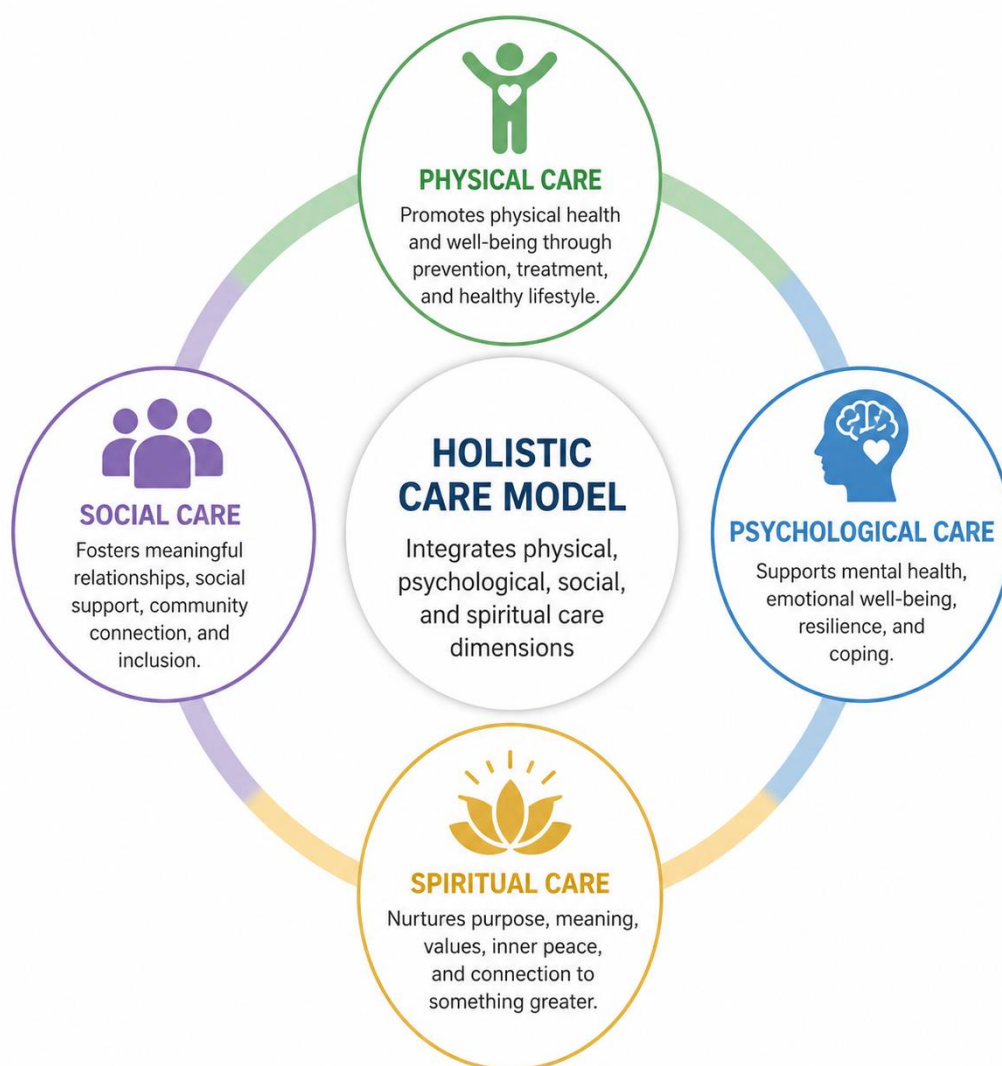


Figure 8: Holistic Care Model

Effectiveness of Nursing Interventions

Nursing interventions have been widely recognized for their effectiveness in reducing anxiety and depression among infertile women, as they address both emotional and psychological dimensions of care alongside medical treatment (Kiani et al., 2023). Numerous studies highlight that women receiving structured nursing support experience significantly lower levels of stress compared to those who receive only routine clinical care (Sharma et al., 2022). These interventions are particularly important because infertility is often accompanied by repeated treatment failures, uncertainty, and social pressure, all of which contribute to emotional instability (Wang et al., 2023). Structured psychosocial support provided by nurses helps patients develop coping mechanisms, improve

emotional resilience, and maintain a positive outlook during treatment cycles (Kumar et al., 2021). Counseling, for instance, allows patients to express their feelings openly, reducing emotional burden and enhancing psychological well-being (Simbar et al., 2021). Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) helps in identifying and modifying negative thought patterns, which significantly reduces anxiety and depressive symptoms (Hajian et al., 2022). Educational interventions also play a key role by increasing patient awareness about infertility treatments, thereby reducing fear and uncertainty associated with the unknown (Zayeri et al., 2021). Relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, and expressive writing further contribute to stress reduction and emotional balance (Greil et al., 2018). In Table 1 Nursing Interventions and Their Outcomes, various interventions such as counseling, CBT, education, and relaxation techniques have been shown to produce positive mental health outcomes, including reduced anxiety, improved coping mechanisms, increased confidence, and enhanced emotional stability (Peterson et al., 2022). This table highlights the multidimensional nature of nursing care, where different interventions target specific psychological needs but collectively contribute to overall well-being (Martins et al., 2021). Research indicates that women who receive combined interventions, rather than a single approach, show greater improvement in mental health outcomes (Ionescu et al., 2021). This integrated approach ensures that emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of psychological distress are addressed simultaneously (Dube et al., 2023). Furthermore, nursing interventions have been associated with improved treatment adherence, as emotionally stable patients are more likely to continue infertility treatment and follow medical recommendations (Koochaksaraei et al., 2023). Improved adherence directly contributes to better treatment outcomes and increased chances of success (Heidari et al., 2025). Studies also show that psychosocial support reduces dropout rates in infertility treatment programs, which is a common issue due to emotional exhaustion (Coskun et al., 2025). In addition, these interventions enhance patient satisfaction by creating a supportive and empathetic healthcare environment (Xu et al., 2025). Patients who feel emotionally supported report higher levels of trust in healthcare providers and greater engagement in their care (Zhang et al., 2024). Nursing interventions also play a preventive role by identifying early signs of anxiety and depression and addressing them before they develop into severe mental health conditions (Bagade et al., 2023). This early intervention approach significantly reduces long-term psychological complications (Singh et al., 2022).

Table 1: Nursing Interventions and Their Outcomes

Intervention	Outcome
Counseling	Reduced anxiety and depression
CBT	Improved coping mechanisms
Education	Increased awareness and confidence
Relaxation techniques	Stress reduction
Writing therapy	Emotional relief

Comparative Effectiveness

Different nursing interventions used in infertility care vary in their level of effectiveness depending on individual patient needs, psychological condition, cultural background, and stage of treatment,

making it essential to adopt a personalized approach rather than a one-size-fits-all strategy (Kiani et al., 2023). Research suggests that the effectiveness of any intervention is closely linked to how well it aligns with the patient's emotional state and coping capacity (Sharma et al., 2022). Among the various interventions, psychological counseling is considered highly effective because it provides a safe space for emotional expression and directly addresses underlying stress, anxiety, and depressive thoughts (Wang et al., 2023). Similarly, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) has been widely recognized for its strong impact on reducing anxiety and depression by helping patients identify and restructure negative thinking patterns (Kumar et al., 2021). These interventions are particularly beneficial for patients experiencing severe psychological distress, as they target both emotional and cognitive aspects of mental health (Simbar et al., 2021). On the other hand, educational interventions, while essential, are generally considered moderately effective because they primarily focus on increasing knowledge and reducing uncertainty rather than directly addressing deep emotional issues (Hajian et al., 2022). However, education still plays a crucial role in improving patient confidence and treatment adherence by providing clarity about procedures and expectations (Zayeri et al., 2021). Relaxation techniques such as meditation, deep breathing, and expressive therapies are also categorized as moderately effective, as they help reduce stress and promote emotional balance but may not fully resolve underlying psychological concerns on their own (Greil et al., 2018). As illustrated in Table 2 Effectiveness Level of Interventions, counseling and CBT demonstrate high effectiveness due to their direct impact on emotional and cognitive functioning, while education and relaxation techniques show moderate effectiveness as supportive strategies that enhance overall well-being (Peterson et al., 2022). This comparison highlights that no single intervention is sufficient on its own, and combining multiple approaches often leads to better outcomes (Martins et al., 2021). For instance, integrating counseling with relaxation techniques can provide both emotional relief and practical stress management skills (Ionescu et al., 2021). Similarly, combining education with CBT can improve both understanding and psychological resilience (Dube et al., 2023). Studies have shown that patients receiving multimodal interventions experience greater reductions in anxiety and depression compared to those receiving only one type of intervention (Koochaksaraei et al., 2023). The effectiveness of interventions is also influenced by factors such as duration of infertility, previous treatment experiences, and level of social support (Heidari et al., 2025). Patients with longer infertility duration or repeated treatment failures may require more intensive interventions such as counselling and CBT rather than basic educational support (Coskun et al., 2025). In contrast, patients at early stages of infertility may benefit significantly from education and relaxation techniques, which help in building awareness and preventing the development of severe psychological distress (Xu et al., 2025). Furthermore, cultural beliefs and societal expectations may also affect how patients respond to different interventions, emphasizing the need for culturally sensitive care (Zhang et al., 2024). Individualized assessment by nurses is therefore essential to determine the most appropriate combination of interventions for each patient (Bagade et al., 2023). Continuous evaluation of patient response helps in modifying interventions to achieve optimal outcomes (Singh et al., 2022).

Table 2: Effectiveness Level of Interventions

Intervention	Effectiveness
Counselling	High
CBT	High
Education	Moderate

Relaxation	Moderate
Writing therapy	High

Factors Influencing Intervention Success

The success of nursing interventions in managing anxiety and depression among women undergoing infertility treatment is significantly influenced by a range of demographic and psychosocial factors, which determine how effectively patients respond to different care strategies (Kiani et al., 2023). Among these, the duration of infertility plays a critical role, as women experiencing long-term infertility are more likely to develop chronic stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms due to repeated treatment failures and prolonged uncertainty (Sharma et al., 2022). Studies have shown that the longer the duration of infertility, the greater the emotional burden, making it more challenging for standard nursing interventions to achieve optimal outcomes (Wang et al., 2023). Financial stability is another key factor, as infertility treatments such as IVF and ART are often expensive and require multiple cycles, creating economic stress that can intensify psychological distress (Kumar et al., 2021). Women facing financial constraints may experience additional anxiety related to treatment affordability and future planning, which can reduce the effectiveness of emotional support interventions (Simbar et al., 2021). Social support also plays a crucial role in determining intervention success, as women who receive strong support from partners, family, and friends tend to cope better with infertility-related stress compared to those who experience isolation or lack of understanding (Hajian et al., 2022). The absence of a supportive environment can significantly increase the risk of depression and reduce the impact of nursing care (Zayeri et al., 2021). As summarized in Table 3 Risk Factors and Their Impact, factors such as long infertility duration, financial burden, social pressure, and lack of awareness contribute differently to anxiety and depression levels among infertile women (Greil et al., 2018). This table highlights that psychological distress is not caused by a single factor but rather by the interaction of multiple elements that collectively influence mental health outcomes (Peterson et al., 2022). For example, women with prolonged infertility and limited financial resources may experience higher levels of stress compared to those with shorter treatment duration and better economic support (Martins et al., 2021). Similarly, lack of awareness about infertility treatments can increase fear and uncertainty, thereby reducing the effectiveness of interventions such as counseling and education (Ionescu et al., 2021). Cultural beliefs and societal expectations further contribute to emotional distress, particularly in communities where childbearing is strongly linked to social identity and marital stability (Dube et al., 2023). These cultural pressures often lead to feelings of guilt, shame, and reduced self-esteem, which can hinder psychological recovery (Koochaksaraei et al., 2023). Age is another demographic factor that may influence intervention outcomes, as older women may experience greater anxiety due to declining fertility potential and increased pressure to conceive (Heidari et al., 2025). Younger women may struggle with uncertainty and lack of readiness for long-term treatment processes (Coskun et al., 2025). Coping style is also an important psychosocial determinant, as women who adopt adaptive coping strategies such as problem-solving and emotional expression tend to benefit more from nursing interventions compared to those who rely on avoidance or denial (Xu et al., 2025). Previous treatment experiences, especially repeated failures, can negatively affect motivation and emotional resilience, making it harder for interventions to produce positive outcomes (Zhang et al., 2024). Healthcare accessibility and quality of care also influence intervention success, as limited access to trained professionals or inadequate counseling services may reduce the effectiveness of nursing support (Bagade et al., 2023). Furthermore, psychological readiness and willingness to seek help play a significant role, as patients who are open to counselling and support are more likely to experience improvement in mental health (Singh et al., 2022). Continuous assessment and individualized care planning by nurses are therefore essential to address these influencing factors and enhance intervention effectiveness (Taylor et al., 2021).

Table 3: Risk Factors and Their Impact

Risk Factor	Impact
Long infertility duration	Increased depression
High treatment cost	Increased anxiety
Social pressure	Emotional distress
Lack of knowledge	Increased fear

Challenges in Nursing Practice

Despite their proven effectiveness, nursing interventions in infertility care face several significant challenges that can limit their impact on reducing anxiety and depression among women, particularly in resource-constrained healthcare settings (Kiani et al., 2023). One of the primary barriers is the lack of adequately trained personnel, as many nurses may not receive specialized training in psychological counseling or mental health support, which reduces their ability to effectively address complex emotional needs (Sharma et al., 2022). This gap in training often results in a focus on physical care while psychological aspects remain under-addressed (Wang et al., 2023). Time constraints within clinical settings also pose a major challenge, as high patient loads and busy schedules limit the amount of time nurses can dedicate to providing individualized emotional support and counseling (Kumar et al., 2021). Insufficient time for patient interaction can lead to superficial communication, preventing the development of trust and effective therapeutic relationships (Simbar et al., 2021). Cultural stigma associated with infertility is another critical barrier, especially in societies where childbearing is closely linked to a woman’s identity, leading patients to feel shame or reluctance in discussing their emotional struggles openly (Hajian et al., 2022). This stigma often discourages women from seeking psychological support, thereby reducing the effectiveness of nursing interventions (Zayeri et al., 2021). Limited healthcare resources further complicate the situation, as many infertility clinics lack dedicated mental health professionals, counseling spaces, and structured psychosocial programs (Greil et al., 2018). Inadequate infrastructure restricts the implementation of comprehensive care models that integrate both physical and psychological support (Peterson et al., 2022). Financial constraints within healthcare systems may also limit the availability of training programs and support services for nurses, thereby affecting the quality of care delivered (Martins et al., 2021). In addition, lack of standardized protocols for psychological care in infertility treatment leads to inconsistency in intervention delivery across different healthcare settings (Ionescu et al., 2021). This variability can reduce the overall effectiveness of nursing practices in managing anxiety and depression (Dube et al., 2023). Communication barriers, including differences in language, literacy levels, and cultural beliefs, can also hinder effective patient education and counseling (Koochaksaraei et al., 2023). These barriers may result in misunderstandings, reduced patient engagement, and lower adherence to treatment plans (Heidari et al., 2025). Moreover, emotional burnout among nurses due to high workload and continuous exposure to distressed patients can negatively impact their ability to provide empathetic and supportive care (Coskun et al., 2025). This burnout may lead to reduced job satisfaction and decreased quality of patient interaction (Xu et al., 2025). Lack of interdisciplinary collaboration between nurses, psychologists, and fertility specialists is another limitation that affects holistic care delivery (Zhang et al., 2024). Without coordinated teamwork, patients may not receive comprehensive support addressing all aspects of their well-being (Bagade et al., 2023). Despite these

challenges, addressing these barriers through targeted strategies such as specialized training programs, increased staffing, improved resource allocation, and the development of standardized care protocols can significantly enhance the effectiveness of nursing interventions (Singh et al., 2022). Promoting awareness and reducing stigma through education and community outreach can also encourage patients to seek psychological support more openly (Taylor et al., 2021).

Discussion

The integration of nursing interventions into infertility care has been shown to significantly improve both psychological and clinical outcomes, as it ensures that patients receive comprehensive support addressing not only their physical needs but also their emotional and mental well-being (Kiani et al., 2023). This integrated approach is particularly important because infertility treatment is often associated with high levels of stress, anxiety, and uncertainty, which can negatively affect patient engagement and treatment success (Sharma et al., 2022). When nursing interventions such as counseling, education, and emotional support are incorporated into routine care, they help stabilize patients' emotional state, enabling them to cope more effectively with the challenges of infertility (Wang et al., 2023). Emotional stability plays a key role in enhancing patient compliance, as individuals who feel supported and mentally balanced are more likely to adhere to treatment protocols and attend follow-up appointments (Kumar et al., 2021). Improved compliance directly contributes to better clinical outcomes by ensuring consistency in treatment and timely medical interventions (Simbar et al., 2021). Furthermore, reducing anxiety and depression through nursing care has been associated with improved physiological responses, including better hormonal balance, which may positively influence fertility outcomes (Hajian et al., 2022). Patients who maintain a positive emotional state are more likely to remain motivated throughout multiple treatment cycles, even in the face of setbacks (Zayeri et al., 2021). The integration of psychological care also improves overall quality of life, as patients experience reduced emotional burden, improved relationships, and greater satisfaction with healthcare services (Greil et al., 2018). This holistic improvement enhances not only individual well-being but also family dynamics and social functioning (Peterson et al., 2022). Nurses play a crucial role in bridging the gap between physical treatment and emotional well-being by acting as caregivers, educators, and counselors who provide continuous support throughout the infertility journey (Martins et al., 2021). Their ability to build strong therapeutic relationships with patients fosters trust, open communication, and emotional comfort (Ionescu et al., 2021). This connection allows nurses to identify early signs of psychological distress and implement timely interventions to prevent escalation into severe anxiety or depression (Dube et al., 2023). Moreover, nurses facilitate coordination between different healthcare professionals, ensuring that patients receive multidisciplinary care that addresses all aspects of their condition (Koochaksaraei et al., 2023). This collaborative approach improves the efficiency and effectiveness of treatment (Heidari et al., 2025). Integrating nursing interventions also helps reduce treatment dropout rates, as emotionally supported patients are less likely to discontinue therapy due to stress or frustration (Coskun et al., 2025). Sustained participation in treatment programs increases the likelihood of successful outcomes (Xu et al., 2025). In addition, patient education provided by nurses empowers women to make informed decisions about their treatment, enhancing their sense of control and confidence (Zhang et al., 2024). This empowerment further contributes to psychological resilience and positive coping strategies (Bagade et al., 2023).

Conclusion

Nursing interventions play a vital role in managing anxiety and depression among women undergoing infertility treatment by addressing both emotional and psychological needs alongside medical care. Infertility is not only a physical condition but also a deeply distressing experience that can affect a woman's mental health, self-esteem, and overall quality of life. Interventions such as counseling, education, relaxation techniques, and holistic care provide essential support that helps patients cope with stress, reduce anxiety, and develop positive coping mechanisms. These approaches empower women to better understand their treatment journey, manage emotional challenges, and maintain hope during difficult phases. The effectiveness of nursing care lies in its patient-centered approach, where individualized support ensures that each woman's unique emotional and psychological needs are met. By promoting emotional stability, these interventions also improve treatment adherence and

satisfaction, ultimately contributing to better clinical outcomes. However, the integration of structured psychological support into routine infertility care remains limited in many healthcare settings. Therefore, there is a strong need to strengthen the role of nurses through proper training, resource allocation, and the development of standardized care protocols. Incorporating comprehensive nursing interventions into infertility treatment can significantly enhance mental well-being and ensure holistic, compassionate, and effective patient care.

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