

Stress and tension do not stop fertility treatment from working

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Women undergoing IVF or other assisted reproduction therapy can be reassured that emotional distress caused by their infertility or other life events will not prevent the treatment from working.

Infertility affects up to 15% of the childbearing population and over half of these individuals will seek medical advice in the hope of becoming a parent.

Many infertile women believe that emotional distress (for example stress and tension) is a factor in not getting pregnant naturally or lack of success with [fertility treatment](#). This view is largely based on anecdotal evidence and fertility myths such as 'don't think about it and you'll get pregnant'.

However, doctors are sceptical that stress affects fertility due to the lack of evidence on this issue.

The authors, led by Professor Jacky Boivin from the Cardiff Fertility Studies Research Group, investigated links between the success of fertility treatment and stress by undertaking a large scale review (meta-analysis) of related research.

Fourteen studies with 3,583 infertile women undergoing a cycle of fertility treatment were included in the review. The women were assessed before fertility treatment for [anxiety](#) and stress. The authors then compared data for women who achieved [pregnancy](#) and those who

did not.

The results show that emotional distress was not associated with whether or not a woman became pregnant.

Professor Boivin therefore argues that "these findings should reassure women that [emotional distress](#) caused by fertility problems or other life events co-occurring with treatment will not compromise their chance of becoming pregnant".

Provided by British Medical Journal

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