

# Study shows women's emotional distress is not associated with poor infertility treatment outcomes

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Infertility treatments, such as in-vitro fertilization (IVF), are stressful experiences for women that can take large emotional tolls, especially when the treatment fails. At a time when extra support is needed, infertile women often report that family and friends urge them to "just relax" so they can conceive, causing women to feel as if their mental state is to blame for treatment failures. But a new study reveals evidence that women's emotional state does not have a strong connection with the success of infertility treatment.

Co-authored by Marci Lobel, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology and Jennifer Nicoloro SantaBarbara, MSW, MA, and colleagues at Stony Brook University, the study results are published in *Social Science and Medicine*.

The researchers analyzed more than 20 published studies involving more than 4,000 women to investigate whether women's emotional distress impedes the success of infertility treatments. The results of the analysis indicated that women's distress, including anxiety and depressive symptoms, is not associated with poor treatment outcomes. These findings held true for women regardless of their age, how long they were infertile and whether or not they had been treated for infertility previously.

"Our results offer hope and optimism to the many [women](#) who feel

emotionally responsible or blame themselves for poor outcomes of [infertility treatment](#)," summarized Lobel.

**More information:** Jennifer Nicoloro-SantaBarbara et al. Just relax and You'll get pregnant? Meta-analysis examining Women's emotional distress and the outcome of assisted reproductive technology, *Social Science & Medicine* (2018). [DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2018.06.033](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2018.06.033)

Provided by Stony Brook University

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