

# Fab Abs

## Recent Research Abstracts

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### INFERTILITY

Pasch, L.A.; Dunkel-Schetter, C. & Christensen, A. (2002) Differences between husbands' and wives' approach to infertility affect marital communication and adjustment. *Fertility and Sterility*, 77 (6), 1241-1247

OBJECTIVE: To test a theoretical model of the effect on marital communication and adjustment of men's and women's approach to infertility. DESIGN: A cross-sectional research design involving interviews, questionnaires, and a marital discussion task. SETTING: Volunteers from practices of fertility specialists. PATIENT(S): Forty-eight couples currently seeking infertility treatment. INTERVENTION(S): None. MAIN OUTCOME MEASURE(S): Quality of marital communication during a marital discussion task and effect of infertility on the marriage. RESULT(S): Having children was more important to wives than husbands; wives were more involved in trying to have a baby, wanted to talk with their partner more about trying to have a baby, and experienced a greater loss of self-esteem than did their husbands. To the extent that husbands saw having children as important, were involved in trying to have a baby, or wanted to talk with their wives about trying to have a baby, the quality of marital communication when discussing infertility was less negative, and in turn, wives perceived a more positive effect of infertility on their marriage. CONCLUSION(S): Increases in husbands' interest and involvement in fertility treatment may lead to positive changes in couple communication about infertility and to a more positive effect of infertility on the marriage.

Peterson, B.D.; Newton, C.R. & Rosen, K.H. (2003) Examining congruence between partners' perceived infertility-related stress and its relationship to marital adjustment and depression in infertile couples. *Family Process*, 42 (1), 59-70

Because studies examining the emotional impact of infertility-related stress generally focus on individuals, there has been little research examining how relationship and individual variables are linked. The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of congruence (ie agreement) between partner's perceived infertility-related stress and its effects on depression and marital adjustment in infertile men and women. Couples referred for infertility treatments at a University-affiliated teaching hospital completed the Fertility Problem Inventory (FPI), the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) 3 months prior to their first treatment cycle. Study findings show that men and women in couples who perceived equal levels of social infertility stress reported higher levels of marital adjustment when compared to men and women in couples who perceived the stress differently. In addition, women in couples who felt a similar need for parenthood reported significantly higher levels of marital satisfaction when compared to women in couples where the males reported a greater need for parenthood. While couple incongruence was unrelated to depression in males, incongruence over relationship concerns and the need for parenthood was related to female depression. These findings provide initial support for the theory that high levels of agreement between partners related to the stresses they experience help them successfully manage the impact of these stressful life events. Possibilities for future research examining the construct of couple congruence are discussed.

McQuillan, J.A.; Griel, A.L.; White, L. & Jacob, M.C. (2003) Frustrated fertility: infertility and psychological distress among women. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 65 (4), 1007-1018

Using a random sample of 580 Midwestern (USA) women, we test the hypothesis that women who have experienced infertility report higher psychological distress. Approximately one third of our sample reports having experienced infertility sometime in their lives, although the majority of the infertile now have biological children. Drawing hypotheses from identity and stress theories, we examine whether roles of resources condition the effects of infertility or whether its effects are limited to childless women. Infertility combined with involuntary childlessness (including biological and social) is associated with significantly greater distress. For women in this category, the risk of distress is substantial.