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An Extensive Evaluation of a Study on the Effects of Job Stress on Infertility

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to look into how working people's infertility was affected by their job stress. A thorough analysis of the literature was done to find pertinent research that looked at the connection between work stress and infertility. The research' conclusions and methodological merit were examined. According to the review's findings, there is a big connection between work stress and infertility. According to the studies, those who experience high levels of work-related stress are more likely to experience infertility, including lower fertility and greater rates of miscarriage. This could be as a result of stress's harmful effects on the reproductive system, which include altered hormone levels and irregular menstruation cycles. The review discovered that lower sperm quality and quantity may result from job stress, which may potentially have an effect on male infertility. The effect magnitude did, however, seem to be smaller than that seen in females. Overall, the study emphasises the need for initiatives to lower occupational stress levels, particularly for those who are trying to get pregnant. Additionally, more investigation is required to comprehend the mechanisms through which workplace stress affects fertility and to create practical mitigation measures.

Keywords: Work environment, Job stress, Work life balance, Infertility.

Introduction

Although stress can arise under a variety of work conditions, it is frequently exacerbated when staff members feel they have little support from managers and co-workers and little influence over work procedures. Any workplace will inevitably experience work-related stress. Employee performance may suffer as a result, and if it goes unchecked, it might really harm the company. Although stress can arise in a variety of work settings, it is frequently exacerbated when workers feel insufficient support from their supervisors or co-workers. It is obvious how job stress affects workers' performance, thus companies must take action to lessen it. The origins and effects of workplace stress will be covered in this article, along with possible solutions for lowering it and enhancing worker output. Stress and pressure are frequently confused, and this is occasionally used as a justification for poor management techniques.

The demands of the modern work environment make pressure at the office unavoidable. Depending on the available resources and a person's particular attributes, pressure that is viewed as acceptable by a person might even keep employees awake, engaged, and capable of working and learning. Stress

develops when the pressure is too great or otherwise impossible to handle. Employee health and productivity can be negatively impacted by stress. Poor work design (for instance, lack of control over work processes), poor management, unsatisfactory working conditions, and a lack of support from coworkers and supervisors can all contribute to work-related stress. These factors include poor work organisation (the way we design jobs and work systems, and how we manage them), poor work design, and poor management.

According to research, the most stressful types of employment are those that place a high emphasis on expectations and pressures that are excessive and out of proportion to workers' knowledge and skills, where there are little opportunities for workers to exercise any choice or control, and where there is no social support.

Workers are less likely to experience stress at work if the demands and pressures of their jobs are appropriate for their knowledge and abilities, if they have control over the work they do and how they do it, if their supervisors and coworkers are supportive, and if they are given the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect their jobs.

Job Stress and Infertility

Infertility has received relatively little attention as a health issue and as a topic of social science research in the majority of developing countries, and South-East Asian countries in particular (Verma et al., 2020). Infertility affects millions of people who are of reproductive age around the world, having an impact on their families and communities as well. 48 million couples and 186 million individuals are thought to experience infertility globally. Men's infertility is frequently caused by problems with semen ejection, a deficiency in sperm or low sperm counts, or unusual sperm motility and form (morphology). Numerous illnesses that affect the ovaries, uterus, fallopian tubes, and endocrine system, among other organs, can cause infertility in women.

Although infertility is often thought of as a personal issue, the effects of infertility on women can differ from culture to culture and from one society to the next. According to studies from various African nations, infertile couples are far more likely to experience marital instability, such as separation and divorce (Gijssels, Mgalla, and Wambura, 2001). Numerous studies have also shown that family members physically and emotionally assault childless women (Darr and Mrali, 2001). Primary and secondary infertility are two categories for infertility. Primary infertility is when a pregnancy has never been attained, but secondary infertility is when at least one prior pregnancy has been achieved. Fertility care includes all aspects of diagnosing, treating, and preventing infertility. Getting adequate and fair access to reproductive healthcare remains challenging in the majority of countries, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Rarely do benefit packages for national universal health coverage give emphasis to fertility care. Infertility can be caused by a variety of factors in either the male or female reproductive systems. But sometimes it's difficult to identify the underlying reasons behind infertility. Women's infertility may be caused by any of the following: ovarian conditions like polycystic ovarian syndrome and other follicular disorders; uterine conditions that can be inflammatory in nature (like endometriosis), congenital in nature (like septate uterus), or benign in nature (like fibroids); and tubal disorders like blocked fallopian tubes, which are in turn caused by untreated STIs or complications of unsafe abortion, postpartum sepsis, or abdominal/pelvic surgery. The endocrine system includes the hypothalamus and pituitary. Due to variables like changes in the baseline incidence of STIs or the ages of the populations under study, the proportional impact of these factors on female infertility may vary from country to country.

Infertility in Men May Result from any of the Following

Obstruction of the reproductive system causing irregularities in the discharge of semen. This obstruction is likely to affect the tubes that carry semen, including ejaculatory ducts and seminal vesicles. Blockages are usually caused by genital tract infections or injuries, as well as hormonal problems that cause abnormalities in the production of pituitary, hypothalamus, and testicular hormones. Hormones such as testosterone regulate sperm production. Two disorders that result in hormonal imbalance and the inability to produce sperm in the testicles are cancers of the pituitary or of the testicles. Environmental and lifestyle factors like smoking, binge drinking, and obesity can affect fertility. Additionally, exposure to environmental toxins and pollutants may directly disrupt gametes (eggs and sperm), resulting in a decrease in their quantity and poor quality, which leads to infertility.

Objectives

1. To learn how workplace stress affects fertility
2. To evaluate various initiatives to reduce work-related stress

Literature review

People may experience work-related stress as a reaction to pressures and demands that are not compatible with their skills and knowledge and that test their capacity for adjustment. (2011) (Beheshti Far et al.). Workplace stressors can be broken down into two categories: work setting and job content. Buomprisco and others, 2021.

Workplace contents include job content (monotony, understimulation, meaningless tasks, lack of variety, etc.), workload and work pace (too much or too little to do, work under time pressure, etc.), working hours (strict or inflexible, long and unsocial, unpredictable, poorly designed shift systems), and participation and control (lack of involvement in decision-making, lack of control over work processes, pace, hours, methods, and the work environment). Work context includes career advancement, status, and compensation (job insecurity, a lack of promotion opportunities, under- or over-promotion, low social value work, piece-rate payment plans, unclear or unfair performance evaluation systems, being over- or underqualified for a job), as well as the worker's role within the organisation (unclear role, conflicting roles), and interpersonal relationships (inadequate, unsupportive, or unavoidable supervision, poor relationships with coworkers, bullying).

A study by Pesach et al. (2006) indicated a negative correlation between conception and perceived higher workload. Less work hours were linked to a higher risk of delivery following fertility treatment. It has long been believed that psychological anguish plays a significant role in infertility. Psychological elements were discovered to be determinants of the couple's reproductive status in both sexes. However, it is still unclear if psychological stress is a contributing factor to the aetiology of infertility or if it arises as a result of the overall infertility issue. While other aspects of employment, primarily exposures to chemicals, radiation, etc., have been researched, working conditions and psychological stress at work have an essential but understudied impact on female infertility.

Gender disparities in the psychological reactions of couples receiving infertility treatment have been the subject of several research. In general, men were shown to be less motivated to undergo fertility treatments than their partners. Uneeb, & Hashmi (2021) came to the conclusion that whereas stress and sexual issues were etiological variables in men, stress factors in women reflected reactive alterations to infertility. It's likely that work stress contributes to the aetiology of the condition in men, whereas it may be a side effect of infertility in women. Gonadotropin releasing hormone (GnRH), the body's primary sex hormone, is inhibited by elevated amounts of stress hormones in an organisation, including glucocorticoids like cortisol. This decreases sperm count, ovulation, and sexual activity. According to studies done on animals, the adrenal gland's increased production of the stress hormone glucocorticoids is mostly responsible for this stress-related impact on sexual performance. These glucocorticoids work by inhibiting the primary reproductive hormone, GnRH, in the brain. This inhibits the pituitary's release of the gonadotropins luteinizing hormone and follicle-stimulating hormone, which in turn inhibits the production of testosterone, estradiol, and sexual behaviour.

Organizational initiatives to reduce work stress

The World Health Organisation states that when individuals are asked to perform tasks that are outside their scope of knowledge, competence, and coping mechanisms and when they lack the necessary peer and managerial support to bridge the gap, workplace stress is particularly prevalent.

1. Workplace Wellness

The two most effective methods for reducing workplace stress are exercise and healthy living. Exercise helps workers concentrate on the task at hand by taking their minds off the stress of their jobs. By stimulating the creation of endorphins, the brain's feel-good chemicals, it also elevates emotions.

- Every month, invite a yoga instructor to the workplace.
- Hold a step competition between teams for people who wear fitness trackers.
- Provide wholesome snacks.

When people believe that management or the organisation cares about their wellbeing, employees feel appreciated. According to Dart (2022), 83% of employees reported that having access to healthy and fresh food alternatives was a significant bonus, and 66% of workers felt very or very happy when their employer routinely stocked the refrigerator and cupboards. Simple things like keeping cartons of yoghurt or fresh fruit in the refrigerator go a long way with staff.

2. Work Flexibility

As more businesses become aware of the potential advantages it might have on employee performance, the idea of work flexibility has grown in popularity in recent years. Workplace flexibility enables employees to work from various locations, during various hours, and using various resources. Because of this, they are free to complete their work without feeling confined. According to studies, staff members tend to be more involved and productive at work when they feel free to choose how they carry out their duties. Employers may foster an environment where workers can thrive and realise their full potential by providing the appropriate level of work flexibility. Instead of feeling like a prison, the office should be a location that makes it easier to do tasks. Employees should believe that the quality and timeliness of their work, not the time they clock in and out, determine their position. Remote work should be permitted for the employees.

3. Proper Recognition for the Employees

Recognising an employee's accomplishment has a significant positive impact on engagement since people want to be complimented for a job well done. Be thoughtful when deciding how and when to recognise because every employee has a different personality. While more quiet types might prefer a card on their desk or a thank you in person, some employees value a shout-out during a meeting or praise in a company-wide email. Employee engagement and job performance are directly impacted by employee recognition. Employees feel valued and inspired to keep working hard when their efforts are acknowledged and rewarded. The morale, productivity, and job satisfaction of an employee can all benefit from being acknowledged for their achievements. As staff members compete for praise from their colleagues and managers, it can also serve to foster a sense of community within the workplace. Any successful business strategy must include employee appreciation because it lets workers know that their work is acknowledged and appreciated.

4. Distance Counseling Facilities

In order to help employees cope with stress, several businesses have started to offer counselling services. According to a recent study, nearly half of workers said they required assistance in learning how to manage the pressures of their professions. Employees can use this technique in or out of the office, in a group environment or alone, to get ready for any stress that may come their way. Even when working from home, employees can still be productive and enhance their performance thanks to distance counselling services. They give workers a safe and secure platform to seek counselling services from the convenience of their own home or place of business. This enables people to receive the assistance they require without leaving their work area, which can be advantageous for both companies and employees.

Employers can remotely monitor employee wellbeing via distance counselling services, giving them the assurance that all staff members are getting the help they require while maintaining their ability to concentrate on their jobs. Employers may guarantee that their remote employees stay healthy and productive by offering distance counselling services.

Discussion

One's fertility can be significantly impacted by job stress. Infertility in both men and women can be attributed to a poor work environment and the stress that goes along with it. High levels of occupational stress can affect the hormones necessary to maintain reproductive health, according to research. Reduced fertility as well as other health problems like anxiety and sadness may result from this. Recognising the potential threats that work stress may pose to our reproductive health is essential, as is taking proactive measures to lessen it. This entails establishing a welcoming workplace, taking many breaks during the day, indulging in physical exercise and relaxation techniques, and, if necessary, obtaining professional assistance.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that lifestyle factors, particularly stress and smoking, significantly affect infertility among workers in the IT industry. It is crucial to remember that, even while there is evidence connecting job stress and infertility, this does not imply that stress is the only factor contributing to infertility. Various medical issues, hereditary factors, and lifestyle choices including smoking and alcohol intake are only a few of the complicated causes of infertility. It is crucial for people who are trying to get pregnant to manage their stress levels as much as they can because it is evident that job stress can have a bad effect on fertility.

This can involve engaging in relaxation exercises like yoga or meditation, asking friends and family for assistance, and changing one's lifestyle to enhance general health and wellbeing. Employers can also take action to foster a more supportive work environment by providing flexible scheduling, mental health resources, and work-life balance initiatives.

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