

**EXAMINING THE INDIVIDUAL AND DYADIC COPING PROCESSES OF  
MEN AND WOMEN IN INFERTILE COUPLES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO  
INFERTILITY STRESS, MARITAL ADJUSTMENT, AND DEPRESSION**

by

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**ABSTRACT**

This study explored the individual and dyadic coping processes of men and women in infertile couples and their relationship to infertility stress, marital adjustment, and depression. Study participants were comprised of 1,026 men and women (420 of which were couples) who were referred to a university-affiliated teaching hospital for advanced reproductive treatments between the years of 1991 and 2001. Three months prior to treatment, prospective participants completed the Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ), the Fertility Problem Inventory (FPI), the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), and the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI). Findings from the study showed that escape avoidance, accepting responsibility, and self controlling were strongly related to increased stress, depression, and decreased marital adjustment for both men and women; while seeking social support was related to increased marital adjustment. Multivariate analyses of variance and covariance consistently showed that participants in four groups of couples who used high and low amounts of coping differed in their reports of infertility stress, marital adjustment, and depression. In addition, gender differences were found, with females consistently reporting greater levels of stress and depression than males. Several significant couple pairings among the four groups were found. Clinical implications linking study findings with marital and family therapies and ideas for future research are discussed.

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