

Quality of sexual relations in IVF couples

Avicenna fertility center

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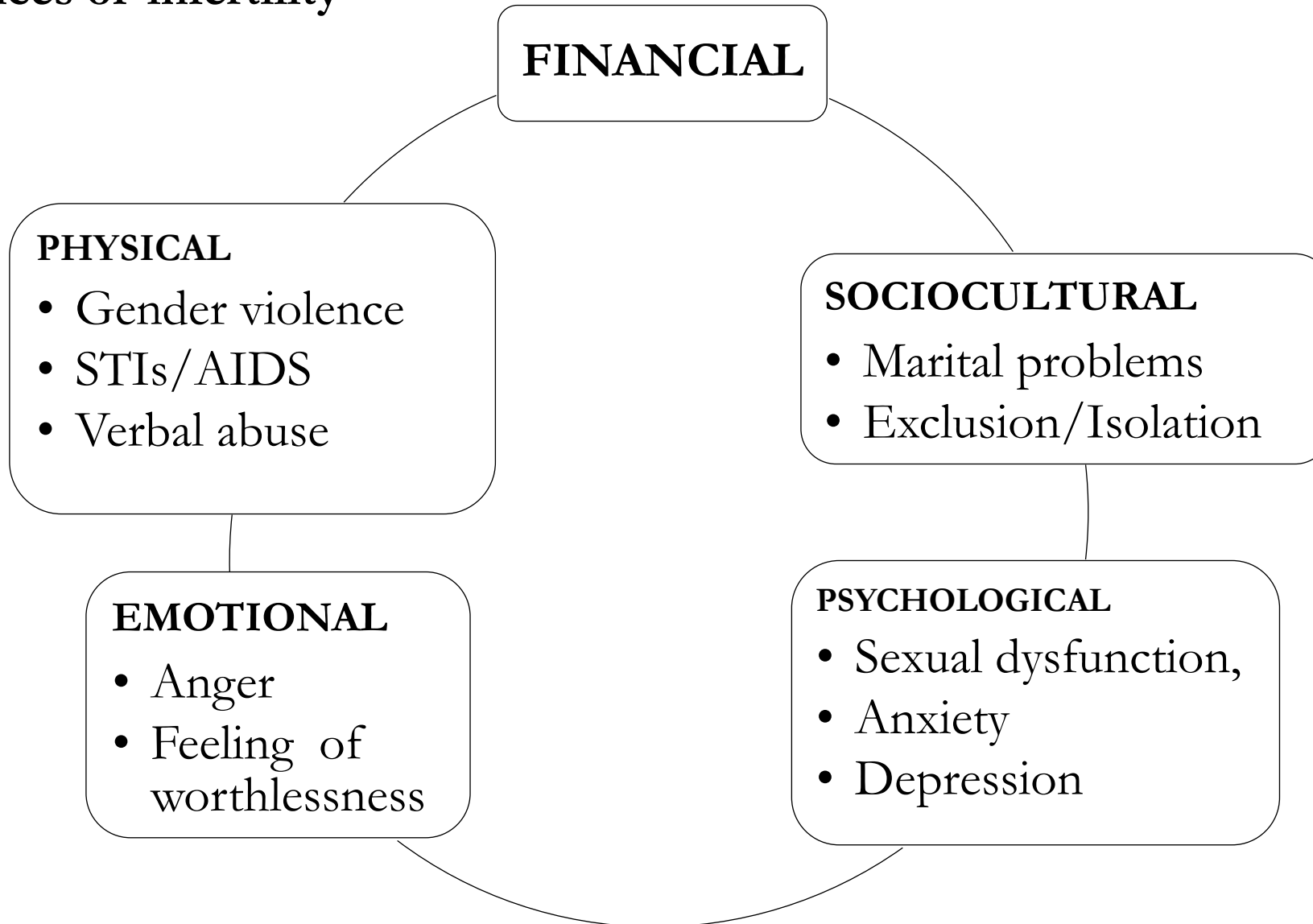
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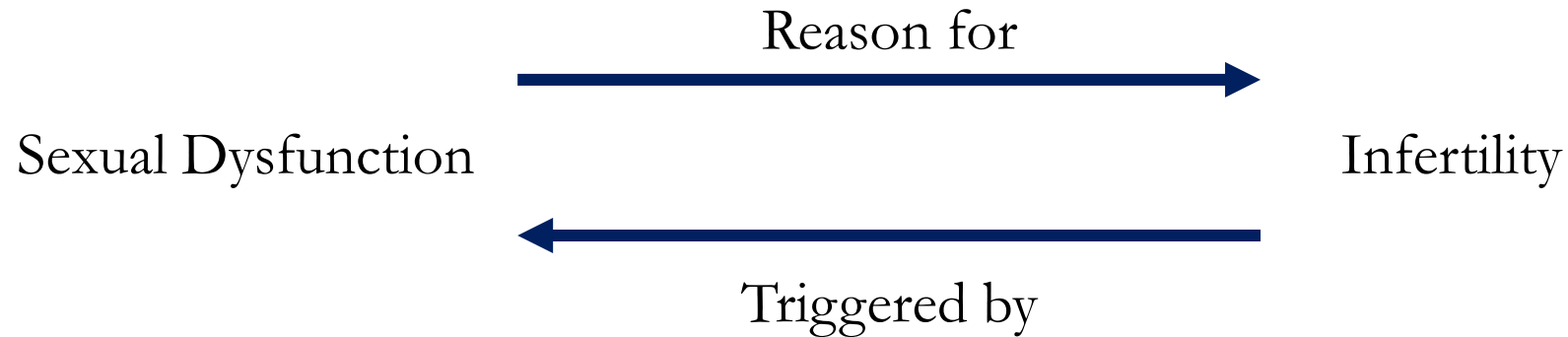
Consequences of infertility



- A systematic literature review was performed, focusing on female and male **sexual dysfunctions due to infertility** on scientific research published between 2012 and 2017 in the English language.
- It can be concluded that **infertility negatively affects the sexuality** of an infertile couple, which is further proven by a high percentage of sexual dysfunctions.
(**43%-90% among women and 48%-58% among men**)
- Couples report **less satisfaction with sexuality**.
- The female reproductive function can be impaired by the innate or acquired circumstances that affect the normal function of **reproductive organs** (genital etiology), **illnesses** (extragenital etiology), or by **psychological factors**.

- Infertility affects different areas of the couple's life.
- Many couples describe the **period of diagnosis and treatment of infertility as the most stressful period of their life.**
- The ability of reproduction is closely connected with
self-image
self-respect
and sexuality
- **Sexual intercourse may lose its spontaneity and erotic value** because the main aim becomes conception
- The treatment of infertility **dictates the frequency and timing of sexual intercourse;** the usual intimate event becomes regulated, controlled and couples often sense that the medical team is symbolically present also during their most personal act.

- Problems often occur due to the **emotional impact of the diagnosis**, and **forced and dictated sexual relations** as part of the treatment and management of the problem.



- The therapist has to break **beliefs tied to fertility** that can negatively affect the couple's sexuality for example:
 - that a woman's worth is connected to her fertility
 - and that masculinity is defined by the ability to perform sexually

- Most studies confirm that sexual satisfaction among infertile couples is lower than among fertile couples
- The majority of studies confirmed that infertile women had problems with sexual function
- In a study published in 2014, which used the FSFI to evaluate it, sexual function of infertile women was estimated to 25.7 ± 4.6 , while in fertile women it was 32 ± 1.1
- One highly significant finding comparing secondary and primary infertility women, shows that **sexual function was most seriously impaired in women with secondary infertility.**
So women with such diagnoses would need even more support and help.

- Studies found **erectile dysfunction** and **premature ejaculation** were most common dysfunction among infertile men.
- Studies confirm that **more women than men have sexual dysfunctions** when diagnosed with infertility, because **infertility treatment also causes stress in partners**, which can result in sexual dysfunctions.
- As the marital problems are inter-related, it can also be assumed that **sexual dysfunction of one partner can provoke sexual dysfunctions in the other.**

- Some research indicate that **infertility treatment may increase the risk of sexual dysfunctions.**

This gives certain indices for clinical improvements of infertility management.

- Couples who go through the process of infertility treatment should be evaluated for sexual dysfunctions, also be offered help in case of diagnosis of sexual dysfunction.

Type of disorder	Men	Women
Desire	Male hypoactive sexual desire disorders	Female sexual interest/arousal disorder
Arousal	Erectile disorder	Female sexual arousal disorder
Orgasm	Delayed ejaculation, premature (early) ejaculation	Female orgasmic disorder, anorgasmia
Pain	Penodynia, scrotodynia	Genito-pelvic pain /penetration disorder, vaginismus