

Social Support and Self-Regulation on Changes in Exercise Behavior Among Infertile Women: A Cross-Sectional Study to Comparison of External and Internal Factors

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Abstract : Background: Exercise behavior (EB) has a significant impact on infertility, but the magnitude of the effect is not easily determined. The aim of the present study was to assess the effect of social support and self-regulation, as external and internal factors, on changes in exercise behavior among infertile women. Methods: For a cross-sectional study conducted in Sanandaj (Iran) in 2023, we recruited infertile women (n=483) from 35 comprehensive healthcare centers by means of convenience sampling. Standardized face-to-face interviews were conducted using established and reliable instruments for the assessment of EB, social support, and self-regulation. Logistic regression models were applied to assess the association between EB, social support and self-regulation. Results: The majority of the participants (56.7%) had secondary infertility, while 70.8% of them did not perform any exercise. Self-regulation and social support were significantly higher in women with secondary infertility than in those with primary infertility ($p < 0.01$). Self-regulation was significantly lower in women whose height was below 160 centimeters (cm) ($p < 0.05$). Social support was significantly higher among participants aged ≥ 35 years and weighing ≥ 60 kilograms (kg) ($p < 0.01$). The odds of EB adoption increased with self-regulation and social support (OR=1.05, 95% CI=1.02-1.09, $p < 0.01$), (OR=1.06, 95% CI=1.02-1.11, $p < 0.01$). Conclusion: Social support and self-regulation almost equally influenced EB in infertile women. Designing support and consultation programs can be considered in encouraging infertile women to exercise in future research.

Keywords : social support, regulation, infertility, women

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