

## Abstract

**Background and purpose:** Most infertile women experience infertility-induced stigma, which can be exacerbated by inappropriate encounters with others. While social support can be reduced and improved by this phenomenon. This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between stigma and social support in infertile women who referred to Caucasus infertility center of Ardabil.

**Methods:** The present study is a descriptive-analytic cross-sectional study which was conducted on 350 eligible infertile women who referred to the Caucasus Infertility Center of Ardabil during 2017. Instruments used included demographic information questionnaire, perceived social support of Zimet, Goldberg and Hiller's general health and infertility stigma scale. For data analysis, descriptive statistics and analytical statistics were used by SPSS software version 22.

**Results:** In this study, the mean and standard deviation of each of the variables of stigma, social support and general health were  $80.28 \pm 25.30$ ,  $42.41 \pm 7.97$ , and  $53.49 \pm 11.71$  respectively. Also, the results of the study indicated a significant relationship between individual-social components such as duration of infertility, occupation and education, as well as social support with stigma ( $P < 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** Based on the findings of the study, it can be said that increasing the sense of social support reduces the experience of stigma induced by infertility. Therefore, considering these findings, it is suggested, that infertile women's service providers are introduced to the psychological and social aspects of infertility so that they can help improve the understanding of infertility-induced stigma as a social support element.

**Keywords:** Infertility; Social support; Stigma