

Research into hypnotherapy for fertility is still in its infancy, but what has been discovered is proving to be very positive. Here I've highlighted the main evidence that is relevant to this exciting field of study. Findings are interesting when considered alongside current success rates for IVF in the UK.

Age	Success Rate
Under 35	32.3%
35 – 37	27.2%
38 – 39	19.2%
40 – 42	12.7%
43 – 44	5.1%
45+	1.5%

**Statistics from the [Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority](#) based on 2009 data.*

Women suffering from depression, stress and anxiety are twice as likely to have problems conceiving. In one study 60% of women who were treated for depression got pregnant within a 6 month period, as opposed to only 24% of untreated women. *M Nicholas, '3 Steps to Fertility'*

A study in Germany showed that men on death row have a very low sperm count. *A Domar 'Conquering Infertility: A mind body guide to enhancing fertility and coping with Infertility'*

Women who had experienced at least one unsuccessful IVF cycle and who had depressive symptoms before continuing IVF treatment experienced a 13% subsequent pregnancy rate, in contrast to a **29% pregnancy rate in women who did not experience depressive symptoms before their IVF cycle**. *A Domar 'Conquering Infertility: A mind body guide to enhancing fertility and coping with Infertility'*

The *Journal of Psychosomatic Medicine* in 1995 reported **that women with a history of depressive symptoms showed twice the rate of subsequent infertility**. A different report in 1993 revealed that **women who experienced depression following the failure of their first IVF had a much lower pregnancy rate than their non-depressed counterparts during their second IVF cycle**. In 1999 *The Journal of American Medical Women's Association* reported that **depressed women successfully treated for their depression showed a 60% increase in pregnancy rate within six months**, compared with just 24% whose depression was untreated. **Women with no depressive symptoms at all are 93% more likely to conceive with IVF.**

Research by experts at the University of California at San Diego and published in *Fertility and Sterility* in 2005 administered a series of questionnaires designed to measure patients' stress levels. The researchers found that **women with the highest levels of stress ovulated 20% fewer eggs** compared with women who were less stressed. Of those who were able to produce eggs, **those who were most stressed were 20% less likely to achieve fertilization success.**

A recent study at Harvard Medical School measured what happened when women who were having difficulty conceiving were given group CBT. They were taught how to identify recurrent negative thought patterns and how to separate truth from fear. **55% of the women who participated had a baby. Compared to 20% who received no treatment.** *M Nicholas '3 Steps to Fertility'*

A study written up in the *International Journal of Fertility* in 1988 found that of women without any physical reason for infertility, the majority showed severe psychological conflict regarding the wish for parenthood.

In 2006, Professor Eliahu Levitas of the Israel Academic Fertility and IVF unit conducted a study, presented at the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology Conference and printed in the *American Medical Journal*, of 185 infertile women that saw their **success rate of IVF double in the test group from 14% to 28% when the subjects underwent hypnosis during implantation**. Levitas concluded that: "This study suggests that the use of hypnosis during ET may significantly improve the IVF/ET cycle outcome in terms of increased implantation and clinical pregnancy rates. Furthermore, it seems that the patients' attitude to the treatment was more favourable." Find out more [here](#) and [here](#).

Research presented in the *Fertility & Sterility Journal* in 1998 **recommended that IVF patients be offered hypnosis to reduce negative emotions that may impair IVF success**. A similar recommendation was made in the *Australian Journal of Clinical Experimental Hypnosis* in 2003 entitled: *Recipe for a miracle: Determination, Optimism, Medical Technology and Hypnosis in IVF*.

Fertility expert and clinical psychologist Dr Elizabeth Muir's landmark research into the use of hypnotherapy and psychotherapy with women who had unexplained infertility revealed that **45% of women** following her mind-body programme **conceived and carried the baby to full term**.

Dr. Peter Quinn a pioneer in the field of fertility, used hypnotherapy with a group of women between the ages of 26 and 42 who had durations of infertility lasting from 2-12 years. **65% of the women went on to have a successful full-term pregnancy after hypnotherapy**. Dr P Quinn and M Pawson, "Psychosomatic Infertility," *European Journal of Clinical Hypnosis Vol4, 1994*.

A report in the *American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis* in 1995 entitled *Hypnosis in the Treatment of Functional Infertility* found **that hypnosis based on imagery and a relaxation strategy was successful in facilitating pregnancy**.

A study by Dr Alice Domar, first published in the 1999 *Journal of the American Medical Women's Association* found that **42% of 132 infertile women** undergoing treatment with a mind/body therapy **conceived within six months** of completing it. Domar followed up on this study with another published in the 2000 journal *Fertility & Sterility*, which found **55% of previously infertile women who followed a mind/body program conceived**, compared with 20% of the control group who used no mind/body technique. Find out more [here](#).

A recent study at Harvard Medical School measured what happened when women who were having difficulty conceiving were given group Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). **55% of the women who were taught how to identify recurrent negative thought patterns and how to separate truth from fear had a baby, compared to 20% who received no treatment**.

A 2006 study by Dr Sarah Berga from Emory University Atlanta studied a group of women with amenorrhea (the inability to ovulate) and found that **80% of infertile women suffering from amenorrhea (inability to ovulate) started to ovulate again after receiving CBT**, as opposed to just 25% in the control group that received no treatment.

Research carried out in 2008 showed that women with premenstrual syndrome (PMS) have significantly decreased autonomic nervous system (ANS) activity and that those with the most severe symptoms might have permanent depression of this key regulatory system.