

Stress is the leading cause of infertility

Dr Kamini Rao, Medical Director, Milann – The Fertility Center, explains the cause and effect

India's IT hub and Silicon Valley equivalent Bengaluru is also the fastest growing city in Asia. However, all the progress and growth has come at a price: high stress levels.

A stressful lifestyle is one of the greatest problems facing the society today. So what are the "lifestyle" factors that affect fertility? Fast-paced hectic work schedules, career demands that lead to postponing the decision to have a baby, erratic sex life, excessive smoking, drinking alcohol, caffeine overload and eating junk food that lead to weight issues.

Unfortunately, most people seem to be unaware of how important these lifestyle choices can be with regard to future health and well-being.

As couples focus on individual careers and building assets before planning a family, by the time they are ready, their bodies do not meet the biological requirements. Studies report that women with stressful jobs have shorter periods than women with low-stress jobs. There is also a significantly higher incidence of pregnancy loss in women who experience high stress.



So how does stress compound the infertility issue? Stress makes one less fertile by its effect on the hormones and reproductive organs. The resultant failure to conceive creates further stress and ends up being a vicious circle. According to Dr Rao, unlike men, women are born with a fixed number of eggs. These get depleted with every menstrual cycle, so it is advisable for women to start a family – latest by 27 years of age.

The younger generation's emergent

lifestyle pattern not only has long-term effects on the general health of the population, but also has far-reaching effects on the socio-economic profile of the city. What can be done to remedy the issue? Moderate exercise, healthy eating habits and behaviour modification has been shown to have beneficial effects on stress levels, weight and hormonal production. Reducing stress and relaxing may help normalise menstrual cycles, improve the health of both the egg and the sperm, and increase the likelihood of fertilisation and implantation.

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