

## **Abstract**

### **Background:**

Infertility is perceived as a problem across virtually all cultures and societies. According to the World Health Organization, Infertility in women is ranked the 5th highest serious global disability among populations under the age of 60. It affects one in six couples in Hong Kong. In recent years, the number of couples seeking treatment for infertility has dramatically increased. Psychiatric morbidity is prevalent in women with infertility and it is known to worsen treatment adherence, causing premature drop out and poorer quality of life. However, little is known about the psychiatric morbidity among local Chinese women with infertility.

### **Objectives:**

To determine the prevalence of psychiatric morbidity, identify the correlates and to evaluate the effectiveness of the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) and the 12-item General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) as screening tools for psychiatric morbidity in Chinese women with infertility.

### **Methods:**

This was a cross-sectional study that examined consecutive women with newly diagnosed infertility attending a local infertility clinic from July 2014 to March 2015. Socio-demographic and clinical factors were recorded. HADS and GHQ-12 were administered as screening tests for psychiatric morbidity. Psychiatric diagnoses were made by a semi-structured psychiatric interview, the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV Axis I Disorders (SCID-I). The results of HADS and GHQ-12 were compared against the psychiatric diagnoses generated from SCID-I.

**Result:**

Among the 126 subjects recruited, 38.1% had current psychiatric disorders. The point prevalence of depressive and anxiety disorders were 23.0% and 19.0% respectively. The lifetime prevalence of overall psychiatric disorders, depressive disorders and anxiety disorders were 42.1%, 26.2% and 23.8%, respectively. Only 16.7% of participants with psychiatric problems received mental health service. Major depressive disorder was the commonest mood disorder, while generalized anxiety disorder was the commonest anxiety disorder. Older age was associated with current overall psychiatric, depressive and anxiety disorders. Higher number of induced abortion and poor relationships with in-law family were associated with current overall psychiatric and depressive disorders. Longer duration of fertility problem was associated with current overall psychiatric and anxiety disorders. Past psychiatric history was associated with current depressive disorders. Both HADS and GHQ-12 were effective as screening tools but HADS performed better than GHQ-12 in screening for overall psychiatric disorders, depressive and anxiety disorders. The optimal HADS-T cut-off was set as 12 which corresponded to a sensitivity of 85.4% and a specificity of 87.2% in screening for current psychiatric disorders.

**Conclusion:**

Psychiatric disorders were common in Chinese women with infertility and the independent factors that were associated with them were identified. Both HADS and GHQ-12 were effective as screening tools but HADS performed better than GHQ-12 in screening for overall psychiatric disorders, depressive and anxiety disorders.