





Comparison of the Effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment–Based Couple Therapy and Integrative Couple Therapy on Dysfunctional Beliefs, (Cognitive/Experiential) Avoidance, Conflict Resolution, and Sexual Satisfaction in Infertile Couples

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The sentence “Infertility is increasingly conceptualized as a biopsychosocial stressor that extends well beyond reproductive functioning...” is conceptually strong, but the paragraph would benefit from a brief theoretical anchoring (e.g., stress–coping or dyadic stress models) to clarify how the biopsychosocial framing informs the later choice of outcome variables.

In the paragraph beginning “A central pathway through which infertility exerts relational harm...”, the transition from marital conflict to dysfunctional beliefs is somewhat abrupt. Please consider explicitly articulating the causal or reciprocal relationship between conflict processes and belief systems to strengthen conceptual coherence.

The paragraph noting exclusions (“one couple was excluded from the ACT group...”) should explicitly state whether attrition analyses were conducted to rule out systematic dropout effects across groups.

While psychometric properties are reported in detail, the sentence “In the present study, Cronbach’s alpha for this instrument was .79” would benefit from a brief comment on whether this reliability is adequate for intervention sensitivity.

The reported alpha of .55 for the procrastination subscale is relatively low. Please address whether this subscale was retained in analyses and how this reliability limitation may affect interpretation of experiential avoidance findings.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The claim “Sexual well-being is another domain that is frequently compromised in infertility” is well supported; however, the paragraph would be strengthened by briefly clarifying why sexual satisfaction is treated as an outcome rather than a mediator in the current model.

In the paragraph starting “From a contextual-behavioral perspective, psychological inflexibility and avoidance-based coping...”, the distinction between experiential avoidance and cognitive avoidance is theoretically important. Please consider adding one clarifying sentence explaining why both constructs are expected to respond differently to ACT-C versus integrative therapy.

The paragraph beginning “Despite this growing evidence, important gaps remain...” clearly motivates the study. However, the novelty claim would be stronger if the authors explicitly stated how many prior comparative trials (if any) have jointly examined all four domains in infertile couples.

The sentence “The research design... was a quasi-experimental study with a pretest–posttest and follow-up design including a control group” raises a methodological issue: given random assignment to groups, please clarify why the design is labeled quasi-experimental rather than randomized controlled.

In the paragraph describing sampling (“Purposive sampling was used...”), it would be helpful to justify the sample size ($n = 45$ couples), either via power analysis or reference to similar intervention studies in infertility contexts.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.