



# BLOSSOM

NEWSLETTER

JULY, 2024





## From The Desk Of The Managing Director

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first edition of Blossom. It gives me immense pleasure to share with you all the first edition of our Quarterly Newsletter. Here, we would be sharing various features on In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF), our achievements, and introducing you to members of our team. Plus, there will be various sections which you will love to go through.

Abha Surgi Centre started its journey nearly 30 years ago with the mission to provide world-class, affordable, high-quality clinical area in the area of gynaecology and fertility and over the years evolved to exceptional IVF treatment that patients across social strata could aspire for. Over the years, we have been successful in bringing joy and happiness to the lives of numerous childless couples visiting us from different parts of India and its neighbouring countries. Our wide range of services includes Infertility investigations and treatment, Laparoscopy / Hysteroscopy, IUI, ICSI, Ovum donation and Surrogacy, as well as gynaecology treatments that Abha Surgi Centre offers.

In recent years, the increased awareness and advancements in assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs) have put IVF into the spotlight as a mainstream treatment for infertility. Yet, it is essential to understand that the IVF journey is a deeply intricate process, far from being a magic wand that instantly grants the dream of parenthood.

Let me offer a perspective. For couples yearning for a child but struggling with infertility, the emotional journey often begins long before they

consult a doctor. In India and neighbouring regions with similar socio-cultural environments, many couples face profound disappointment and societal pressures. In some socio-economic strata, the burden and blame for infertility unjustly fall on the wife, sometimes accompanied by threats of replacement to fulfil familial expectations.

By the time couples consider IVF, they have often navigated a storm of emotions - bewilderment, frustration, anger, fear, jealousy, and even depression - that can take a toll on their mental health. The path to successful IVF is an emotional roller-coaster, demanding immense resilience and support. Yet, can the best fertility centre predict a cent-per-cent rate of success? It cannot.

Again, non-medical individuals often have many questions about IVF each of which can be a potential stress trigger if not addressed with accurate information. They range from "What exactly is IVF? How will it benefit us?" to "Can the mother endure the stress of the treatments?" and "Will we face social isolation because of our IVF baby?"

Please remember, for each concern, there are coping strategies that help navigate the IVF journey.

Finally, it is important to dispel the common myths about IVF. Let me address the most-common ones here.

### **I am young and healthy; infertility is not my concern.**

No. If you are trying for a child and are unable to conceive naturally, it is crucial to address the issue promptly. The World Health Organization recognizes infertility as a disease, much like hypertension or diabetes.

### **IVF is too expensive and inaccessible**

While the process is costly, advancements in medical science have made IVF more accessible. Costs vary depending on treatment, medications and additional services. Your medical team will be able to guide you through the financial implications.

### **IVF is the last resort for childlessness**

No, really. There is a wide range of ARTs available depending on individual cases. IVF is not the final option but just one of many possibilities.

### **IVF is unsafe for the mother's body**

Expertly handled, IVF is safe, with rare medical complications. Fertility treatments do not increase the risk of breast cancer, as affirmed by health experts globally.

Concluding for now and looking forward to your feedback on the first edition of Blossom.

Thanking you,  
Sincerely,

**Dr Bani Kumar Mitra**

## A Brief History Of IVF

The journey of IVF has been a beacon of hope for countless couples worldwide. It began in the 1930s with significant developments in embryology, followed by years of research and scepticism. The first successful IVF birth on July 25, 1978, by Patrick Steptoe and Robert Edwards, marked a historic milestone. Lesley and Peter Brown's healthy daughter, Louise Joy Brown, became the world's first test-tube baby after 102 IVF cycles.

In October 1978, Dr. Subash Mukhopadhyay from Hazaribagh achieved India's first test-tube baby, "Durga" (Kanupriya Agarwal), using primitive instruments and a household refrigerator, further showcasing the global potential of IVF.

### The Positive Impacts of IVF

IVF and related treatments are now integral to the medical and healthcare industry, supported by rapid advancements in ARTs and collaborations between private and academic institutions. IVF centres have spread across India, including Tier II and III cities, making treatment more accessible.

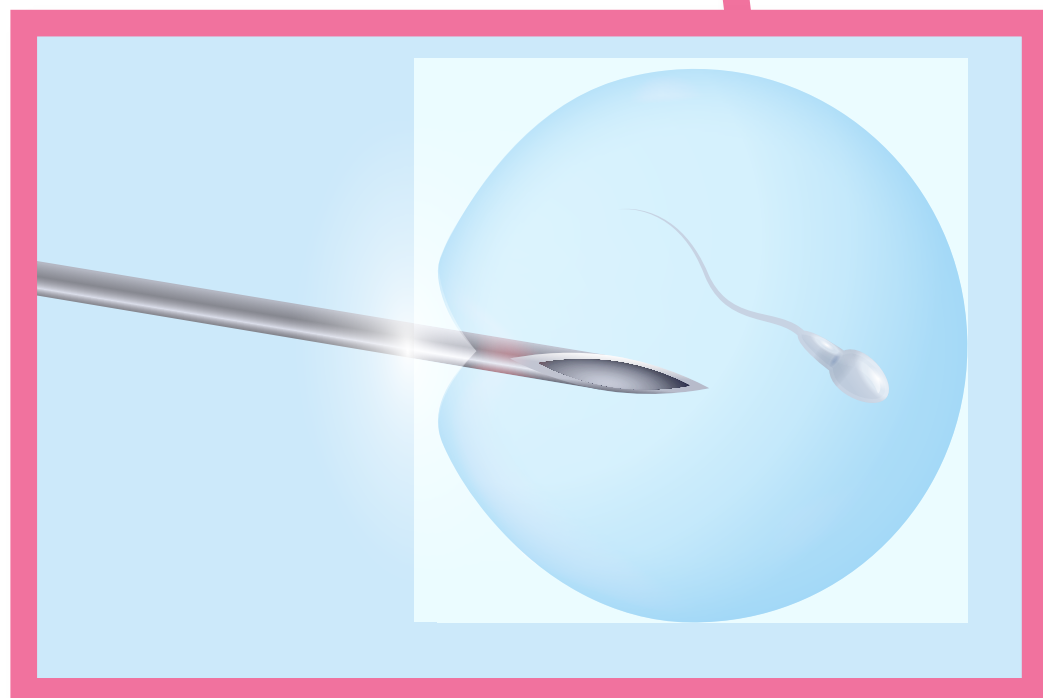
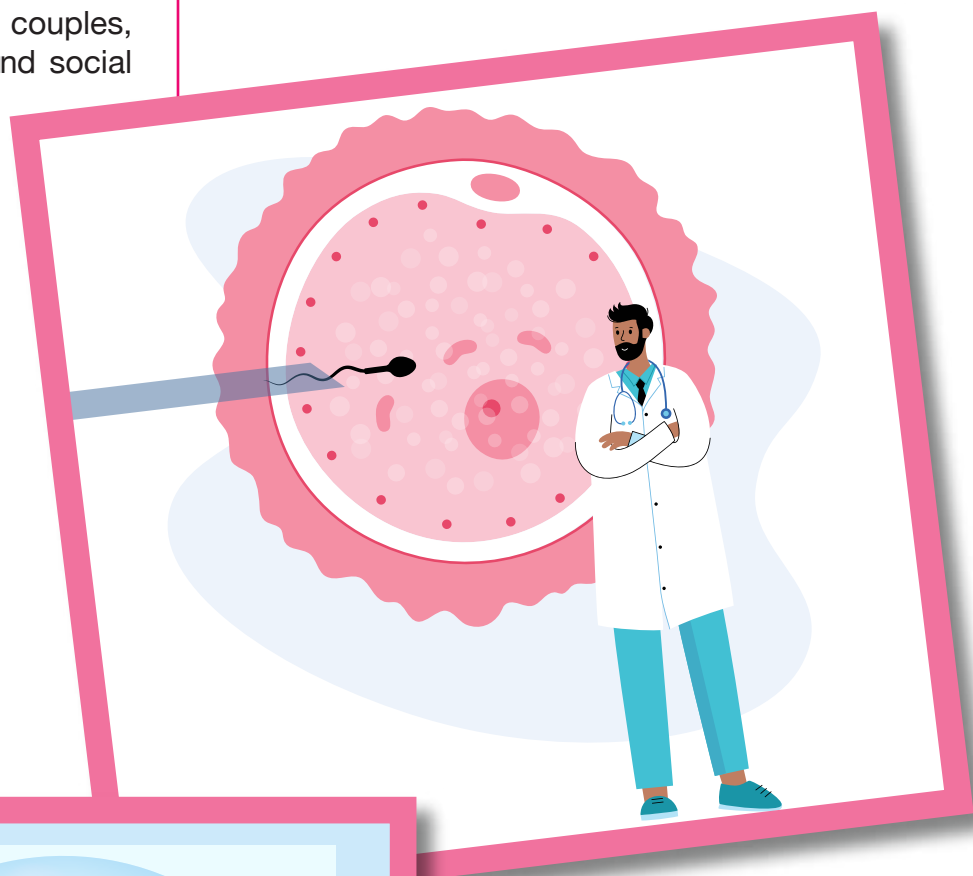
• **Overcoming stigma and sadness:** IVF has provided hope to countless childless couples, helping them overcome the emotional and social challenges of infertility.

• **Increased pregnancy success rates:** Talented doctors worldwide have achieved remarkable success, enabling women to bear healthy children even in their 30s and 40s by selecting the most viable eggs for fertilization.

• **Fertility preservation:** IVF allows couples to preserve their fertility for future family planning, whether due to medical treatments or personal reasons.

• **Inclusivity:** IVF offers same-sex couples and single parents the opportunity to have biological children, fulfilling their dreams of parenthood through safe and effective processes.

In conclusion, while considering the pros and cons of IVF and related infertility treatments, it is vital to choose a reproductive fertility centre that understands your unique needs and provides a customized medical plan. Embrace the journey with hope, resilience, and a supportive environment, knowing that IVF can turn the dream of parenthood into a beautiful reality.



# How Professional Counselling Can Ease The Social And Emotional Stress Of Patients Undergoing IVF

In India, as in the rest of the world, patients have related the mental and emotional health while undergoing IVF similar to that of any major life event. While we can make a general assumption about the journey of IVF, fact remains that every experience that an infertility patient goes through will remain unique and deeply personal. The threshold of stress and pain associated with the treatment is bound to vary depending on each individual's health, life experiences, and personality. IVF and other ARTs are an intricate process in which each woman goes through mood fluctuations and anxiety levels, including the physical discomfort of sonograms, injections, and associated treatment procedures.

For many patients and couples, the experience of IVF carries immense psychological stakes. There are many variables – social, physical, mental, and financial – with each one capable of spinning the affected individual's life out of control. The queries can range from “What exactly is IVF?” to “Can you predict my success?”, from “Will insurance coverage in India include infertility treatment?” to “What if I don't respond to the treatment?”

At the extreme other end of the spectrum is the social ‘threat’ (in India and neighbouring countries) to the wife that she stands to lose her status as the legal NOK (Next of Kin) and claim to her husband's house if she is unable to bear a child and heir. She may be evicted and a new ‘replacement’ brought in to fulfil the purpose. Such a drastic situation is possibly the worst consequence in terms of stress and humiliation when affected by infertility.

In view of the complex and sensitive mental and emotional state of the couple, particularly the patient, when they have finalized the fertility centre, it is critical that it should have a structured professional counselling and support team of empaths that actually “listens” to each case, treating it in exclusivity, weighing each concern, and offering coping strategies by way of solutions. In essence, a customized plan is created for every patient. This team of counsellors should be capable of apprising patients of the key phases of IVF to reduce their levels of stress and anxiety, converting it into one of positive anticipation, as it happens in the case normal pregnancy. Patients need to feel adequately supported and in know of the fact that the outcome of the process remains uncertain for everyone.

In the subcontinent, in- vitro fertilization (IVF) and assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs) are usually influenced by socio-emotional factors that are a mix of factors unique to the subcontinent and global as well. This again shines the light on the team of counsellors that each well-equipped fertility centre ought to have, one that will work

closely with patients to alleviate fears and anxiety and support them through the process.

Societal attitudes with respect to infertility have shown to affect a couple's social standing and mental health. When a couple gradually realizes that they are unable to become parents despite trying, a deep disappointment regarding their childlessness sets in. If after two years of marriage, the mother-to-be is unable to conceive naturally despite trying, societal pressures start kicking in leading to panic. The couple is made to feel conscious and inferior because of their childlessness at family gatherings.

This unnatural pressure may escalate to an alarming level if they cannot become parents even at the end of three or four years of marriage. In such cases, societal and social pressure usually starts taking a toll on the marital life of the couple. Family, work, social activities get affected adversely. In many instances, this results in a perceptible lack of bonding and intimacy in the couple. This is common in India as well as adjoining nations with similar socio-cultural environment.

The stigma of infertility is not confined to any particular socio-economic stratum. The desire for parenthood is uniform across socio-economic classes though the approach to it may vary. Social behaviour towards the wife changes implicitly and/or explicitly because of the situation. Deeply ingrained in the social fabric of our country are traditional rites and rituals exclusively for mothers. Women who are childless despite trying are likely to feel a broad array of emotions at such events, ranging from shame to loneliness.

Currently, there is a wide chasm of ignorance and lack of awareness about the process of IVF. One of the common social complexities that a couple usually face when they have been recommended IVF by their medical team is that the baby is not born “from them”. In that sense, it becomes a major stress trigger. Extensive counselling is required for some patients to help them understand that the gametes are cells of their own bodies and the baby that will be born is theirs.

The treatment process of IVF has been found to be stressful for most patients, with the majority of them going through high levels of confusion, bewilderment, and anxiety. This is only natural due to the fact that this is a new experience with an unfamiliar medical treatment, medications, tests, and protocols involved that may be subject to change over the months. You must put your trust in a new team of healthcare professionals to bring your baby into the world through a process that you may not be completely aware of. All these result in the level of stress, anxiety, and anticipation

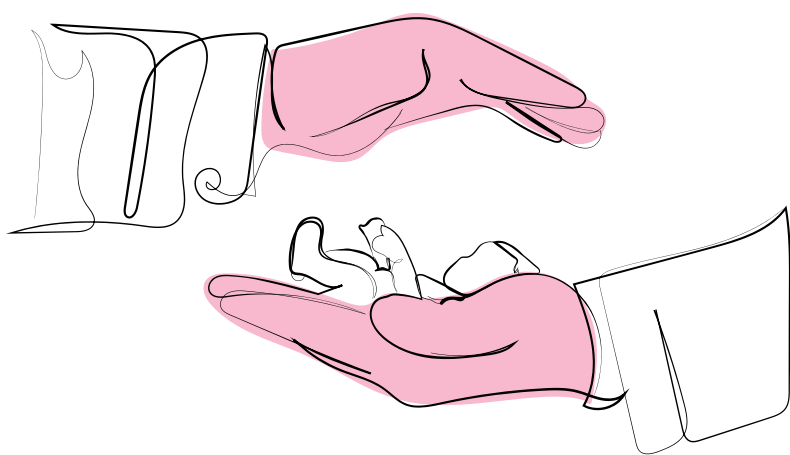


ebbing and falling several times through the pregnancy period, requiring support and coping strategies.

### Healthy Baby Girl Born to Mother After Seven Rounds of IVF Failure – How a Patient Overcame Emotional Setbacks for Motherhood

Facing the aftermath of a failed IVF cycle can be an emotionally and physically draining experience for individuals or couples hoping to start or expand their families. The disappointment faced and emotional impact on any couple, particularly the mother after a failed IVF cycle can be huge. Most individuals and couples invest significant time, energy, and financial resources into IVF with the hope of happy parenthood. They look upon IVF as the solution to their fertility struggles. When the desired outcome is not successful, feelings of grief, frustration, and even guilt are usual. Coping with these emotions is an important part to proceed further and try again. Along with medical treatment, psychological support through professional counselling is important to help the patient revive and look ahead.

Among the particularly successful IVF cases handled by the Abha Surgury Team is the heartwarming case of Mrs. Sana S (name changed to safeguard the patient's privacy) who went through not one or two, but seven cycles of failures. Navigating this extremely stressful period in her life, she went on to have a successful outcome on the eight cycle thanks to the fertility centre's team in whom she had placed her faith. It was a moment of jubilation for all when Sana gave birth to a healthy baby girl after successfully completing her pregnancy. Now, with her child aged two, she is looking forward to her second baby through IVF.



## Case Study

### How the Dream of Parenthood Came True for This Couple at Abha Surgury

“First, we had one another. Then, we had you. Now, we have everything.” In brief, this little line sums up the immense delight of parenthood. It is not tough to see why most couples wish to start their own family and derive profound happiness when their little helpless bundle of joy arrives. But, as we know, this is not the same story for all. There

are couples who are unsuccessful at becoming parents naturally. According to World Health Organisation, infertility is a disease of the male or female reproductive system defined by the failure to achieve a pregnancy after 12 months despite trying for it. Infertility may occur due to male, female or unexplained factors.

However, the good news is that with the rapid advancement of medical science and ARTs including IVF, doctors and their teams are successful in bringing the fulfilment of parenthood to several childless couples.

In this article, we present the case of a couple in their 30s who had failed to become parents earlier and come to Abha Surgury Centre for treatment as they wished to be parents. The prospective mother was about 35 years. She had been married for nine years and was suffering from hypothyroidism, that is, her thyroid gland was unable to produce the required level of hormone for her body's requirement. The husband was suffering from hypertension.

In all their nine years of marriage, they had never able to conceive despite desiring parenthood. She had undergone laparoscopy earlier in a different medical outfit, where the report had stated that it was a case of “unexplained infertility” as her Fallopian tubes were fine and her ovarian reserve (number of healthy, immature eggs in ovaries) was also normal.

The couple had also attempted IUI (intrauterine insemination) once and IVF (In-vitro fertilization) twice – again at different medical centres, and been unsuccessful.

At Abha Surgury, we cross-checked and saw that the earlier tests were correct. However, we were doubtful about the ovum quality that could be an issue.

We put the patient through an ovum pickup and frozen embryo transfer. Unfortunately, we could not make it a successful procedure.

Thereafter, we conducted an error test to determine the reason. Post which, we were successful with the second IVF.

When the first embryo transfer was negative, we had done a detailed check of her endometrium (inner lining of the uterus). The second time, as mentioned above, it was a success.

The patient went through her pregnancy being attended by Dr Bani Kumar Mitra and Dr Nilotpal Roy. She delivered a healthy baby in the month of January 2024. She has had no post-delivery complications.

I would recommend that patients, especially the mother-to-be adopt a patient and hopeful outcome of the entire process. I realize that it can be a long and exhausting journey for the couple, but they need to remain patient. In this particular case, the patient was quite ready to give up after the failed attempts. Today, we can say, her cherished dream has been fulfilled through IVF.

# Myths About IVF

Even in this day and age of easily-available information, there are several myths about fertility and In-Vitro Fertilization that have no medical foundation.

Here's his expert opinion on the most-common ones –

## Fertility is not something to break your head over

If you are trying for a child, and are unable to conceive naturally, you should give serious attention to the matter without wasting time. WHO has recognized infertility as a disease along the lines of hypertension and diabetes. Infertility is a condition when a woman fails to conceive after one year of trying for a baby.



## In-Vitro Fertilization is too expensive and inaccessible

While IVF is a costly procedure, with the rapid advancement of medical science, it is not inaccessible any longer. IVF costs are variable depending on the treatment involved, medications used and additional support and services required.

## In-Vitro Fertilization is the last resort for childlessness

With huge surges in medical technology, there is an entire range of ARTs that may be used depending on the case in question. There is no need to feel pressured about IVF as being the final treatment available when trying for a baby.



## IVF is unsafe for the mother's body

There are no medical stats to substantiate this. When handled by experts, IVF and other ARTs are safe. Medical complications are rare. Taking fertility drugs or undergoing IVF will not increase chances of breast cancer as declared by health experts globally.





## Meet Mrs. Bijoli Bhattacharya – Abha Surgy Centre’s Oldest Employee

**Happiness can be found even in the darkest of times if one remembers to turn on the light –  
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban**

Meet Mrs. Bijoli Bhattacharya, the oldest employee of Abha Surgy Centre, Kolkata. Mrs. Bhattacharya, now a senior citizen, has been associated with the organization since 1985. It was the year of its inception and she joined as part of the founding team and has been on its roles ever since. Back then, it operated under a different name. The name has undergone a change as have the times. But intangibles like loyalty, trust, and dedication towards work remain constants in certain employees – Mrs. Bijoli Bhattacharya, for instance.

Today, she is fondly looked upon by all at Abha Surgy Centre as a reliable maternal figure. With her experience over the years and hands-on skills, Mrs. Bijoli Bhattacharya attends to anti-natal patients for their doctors’ consultations. Since the time the hospital was still in its nascent years, she has worked in an administrative capacity ensuring orderly queues while patients waited for their respective turns for consultation.

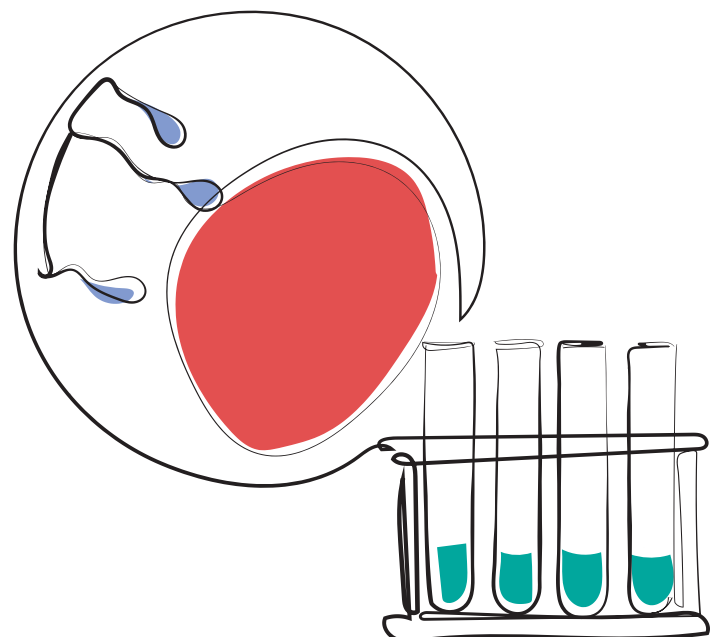
She is also responsible for housekeeping responsibilities that include supervising and approving cleanliness and proper maintenance of public areas, offices, and medical zones of Abha Surgy Centre.

Every employee may have a personal issue from time to time that tends to distract and affect her work. What if it is a huge crisis where her personal life gets rocked violently? You would not expect them to be at their best, of course. Probably, you would even imagine them to break down and leave, or return back in victim-mode. Well, not Mrs. Bijoli Bhattacharya who first lost her husband and then her child tragically. Even while she was grieving, she was willing to give her best to her profession. If anything, she came back to work with an even greater dedication, focused as a

‘karmayogi’ as she no longer had anyone or anything binding her to her personal life. Her work became her path to happiness post her personal crises.

Asked to list Mrs. Bijoli Bhattacharya’s three biggest features as an employee, says Dr Bani Kumar Mitra, Managing Director, Abha Surgy Centre, “Compassionate. Dedicated. Multi-tasker.”

Surely, here’s a leaf all of us can take from Mrs. Bhattacharya’s book. She may be the oldest employee, but she is more than eager to learn new things and take on newer, additional roles and responsibilities. That’s some real inspiration.





## Kaleidoscope



Handmade jewellery by  
Ms. Suparna Samaddar  
(Accountant)



Master Arnish Kar  
S/o Ms. Mili Nandi (Sr. Accountant)  
Passion for singing, Age: 8 yrs 6 months

## Team Images



Team of the  
Abha Surgery Centre





# Award & Recognition



Dr Bani Kr Mitra  
Receiving Excellence Award 2024

