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Nursing Strategies for Monitoring and Managing Adverse Effects of Clomiphene Citrate and Letrozole in Ovulation Induction: A Narrative Review

Fereshteh Afkar(1), Mahmoud Ekhlaszadeh(2), Mehdi Raufi(3), Reza Gholami(4), Mohammad Hossein Adeli(5)

(1). School of Medicine, Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, Kermanshah, Iran

(2). Faculty Member, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah Branch, Kermanshah, Iran

(3). Department of Nursing, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Islamic Azad University Kermanshah Branch, Kermanshah, Iran

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Backgrounds

Infertility is a global health challenge affecting approximately 17.5% of adults, with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) being a leading cause of anovulation.
Pharmacological induction is the first-line therapy. While clomiphene citrate has been the traditional standard, evidence indicates that letrozole may offer superior pregnancy outcomes.
Both medications are associated with adverse effects that impact patient adherence and treatment safety. However, there is limited research on the structured role of nursing in monitoring and mitigating these complications.
This review compares the adverse effect profiles of clomiphene citrate and letrozole and establishes evidence-based nursing strategies for effective patient management.

Methods

Search Strategy: Electronic databases (PubMed and SID) were searched up to December 2025. Keywords included: “infertility drugs,” “clomiphene citrate,” “letrozole,” “ovulation induction,” “adverse effects,” and “nursing care.”
Inclusion Criteria: Studies addressing pharmacological mechanisms, adverse effects, and nursing interventions related to the specified medications (including reviews, clinical trials, and textbooks).
Exclusion Criteria: Studies unrelated to ovulation induction or those not addressing adverse effects.

Findings

Pharmacological Comparison: CC vs. Letrozole
Clomiphene Citrate (CC):
Mechanism: Anti-estrogenic properties.
Clinical Challenges: Associated with vasomotor symptoms (hot flashes), visual disturbances, and significant endometrial thinning.
Risks: Adverse impact on cervical mucus quality and a higher incidence of multiple pregnancy due to excessive follicular recruitment.
Letrozole (LE):
Mechanism: Aromatase inhibitor.
Clinical Advantages: Demonstrates a more favorable impact on endometrial thickness and cervical mucus quality compared to CC.

Outcomes: Recent systematic reviews indicate higher clinical pregnancy and live birth rates in patients with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS).
Safety: Reduced risk of multiple pregnancy due to the stimulation of fewer follicles.
3.The Central Role of Nursing in Infertility Care
Nurses are the primary point of contact and act as the bridge between pharmacological intervention and patient well-being. Nursing care must integrate:

Clinical Monitoring: Early identification of adverse effects, such as Ovarian Hyperstimulation Syndrome (OHSS) or hematologic abnormalities. Systematic monitoring ensures timely clinical intervention and prevents severe complications.
Structured Patient Education: Empowering patients through education regarding medication side effects, proper dosage, and adherence to laboratory follow-ups. This reduces anxiety and ensures treatment protocol success.
Psychosocial Support: Infertility is deeply linked to emotional distress, anxiety, and feelings of inadequacy. Nurses are critical in providing psychological support, which significantly improves treatment adherence and patient satisfaction in reproductive medicine settings.
4. Interdisciplinary Collaboration & Patient Safety
Effective infertility treatment requires a coordinated interdisciplinary model.
Communication: Streamlined communication between nurses, physicians, and patients facilitates the rapid identification of potential risks.
Safety Integration: The integration of clinical assessments and psychosocial support creates a safety net that improves both patient satisfaction and reproductive outcomes.

Conclusion

Both clomiphene citrate and letrozole effectively induce ovulation but present distinct adverse effect profiles. Clomiphene citrate is more linked to anti-estrogenic effects (e.g., vasomotor symptoms, endometrial thinning, and higher multiple pregnancy risks), whereas letrozole offers a more favorable endometrial profile and lower risk of multiple pregnancies, despite potential musculoskeletal or metabolic side effects. Consequently, treatment must be individualized based on patient needs. Furthermore, structured nursing care—including monitoring, patient education, and psychosocial support—is vital for improving safety, adherence, and clinical outcomes. Future efforts should focus on establishing evidence-based nursing guidelines for these therapies.

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