

How Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Helps Infertility

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Infertility is a global problem in both westernized and less developed countries. Increasingly women are experiencing lower rates of birth in their child bearing years. Unfortunately this is a problem that is expected to get worse, due to the increase in maternal age, obesity, smoking, gynecological diseases, and lifestyle factors including poor diet, lack of sleep and increased stress. Environmental factors including chemical exposure and radiation can also play a part.

Allopathic medical treatments for infertility are called Assisted Reproductive Therapies (ART), which refers to drugs, e.g. Clomiphene Citrate to increase ovulation, simple or stimulated Intra Uterine Insemination (IUI) and as a last resort IVF.

These methods can be quite costly, stressful for the couple and have unstable success rates per cycle of treatment. ART also commonly results in severe complications including internal bleeding, infections, multiple births and Ovarian Hyperstimulation Syndrome (OHSS) which can be life threatening ¹.

Acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine have been used effectively for female and male infertility for thousands of years. Today acupuncture is making its way into the mainstream as an effective, scientifically justified fertility treatment. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Acupuncture, facilitate fertility through a holistic approach in which both the physical and mental aspects of the individual are acknowledged and treated.

According to the British Acupuncture Council, female fertility is increased by doing three key things: 1.Regulating the function of the hormonal glands and maintaining hormone levels. 2.Increasing the blood flow to the ovaries and uterus to improve their condition, and helping to relax the uterine muscles to enhance the chance of embryo implantation. 3. Generally helping to relieve stress, anxiety, depression and other emotional disorders. Acupuncture has been shown to be effective in achieving all of these objectives.

In more specific circumstances, acupuncture has been proven to work on two of the common causes of infertility; Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) and endometriosis, as well as increasing the success rate of embryo implantation²⁻⁴.

There is now a body of evidence to demonstrate that the use of acupuncture on its own or in combination with ART, is not only significantly increasing the success rate of pregnancy, but also saving women from undergoing repetitive cycles of ART and its potential complications.

References:

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