

Acupuncture Research Update

"Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food." - Hippocrates

Acupuncture and Fertility



A study published by the National Institutes of Health in 2018 indicates receiving acupuncture treatments can improve the possibility of conceiving a child for patients that have experienced fertility issues. This particular study was conducted on one couple, and focused on treating both partners to achieve conception. The male received acupuncture treatments to improve sperm quality, and the female received acupuncture treatments to remove ovarian cysts and improve blood flow to the uterus. After seven treatments, the ovarian cysts had disappeared, and the couple was able to conceive. The acupoints used in this study were chosen to improve blood flow and energy to the reproductive organs, while also decreasing excess phlegm and fluids in the lower body. Acupuncture has been shown to be very effective at treating infertility in the past and this study confirms those findings.

Infertility is defined as not being able to get pregnant after one year or more of unprotected sex. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 18 percent of women aged 15 to 44 have difficulty getting pregnant or carrying the pregnancy to full term. Infertility is not limited to women though. The CDC reports 35 percent of couples with infertility have a male component to their difficulties. This means that nearly 6.9 million people in the United States have received fertility treatments. Infertility is typically treated with injections, prescription medications and even artificial insemination, but there are still no guarantees that conception will occur even with all of these efforts.

Traditional Chinese Medicine has been proven to increase the chance of conception in couples that are currently receiving fertility treatments. In fact, the success rates of conception increase from 39.4 percent to 65.5 percent when acupuncture and TCM are added to the mix. Acupuncture helps increase fertility by reducing stress, increasing blood flow to the reproductive organs and balancing hormones. Acupuncture treatments can provide increased blood flow to the ovaries and uterus, which creates a stronger chance for an egg to be nourished and carried to full term. In the male, acupuncture treatments can improve sperm quality and motility.

The insertion of acupuncture needles has been proven to stimulate blood flow, so for men, regular acupuncture treatments can increase blood flow to the testicular arteries. The testicles need blood to provide nutrients, remove waste products and keep the area cool. Excess waste products can damage sperm while they mature in the testicles. Stagnation of blood in the scrotum can increase testicular temperatures, which can be very detrimental to the forming sperm. By increasing blood flow to and from this area, nutrients are brought in and waste is removed, which will contribute to healthier sperm.

The most common cause of female infertility is due to a problem with ovulation. This can be caused by imbalanced hormones, stress or even a buildup of excess phlegm in the lower body. All of these situations may prevent the release of a mature egg from the ovaries. When progesterone is lacking, the fetus may be unable to attach to the uterus. Regular acupuncture treatments have been shown to correct these imbalances, making conception more possible.

If infertility is something you are dealing with, ask me how I can help. The chances of getting pregnant and having a happy healthy baby are much better when combining both Western medicine and Eastern medicine.

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