

IVF Treatment and Acupuncture

Research based on the article published on the 7 February 2008 by the British Medical Journal. Research associate Eric Manheimer.

It is estimated that around 10-15% of couples are having difficulty conceiving during their reproductive lives and are therefore seeking alternative fertility treatments. A commonly used treatment is IVF, in vitro fertilization which involves retrieving a woman's egg, fertilizing the egg in a laboratory, and then transferring the embryo back into the woman's uterus.

This entire procedure which takes place over two weeks is referred to as an in vitro fertilization cycle. The number of procedures taking place since 2000 have increased dramatically over the decade and because each cycle is expensive, lengthy, and stressful, new drugs and procedures have been developed to improve the success rates. However progress has been limited over the years and research has found acupuncture used in conjunction with the IVF cycle increases the success rates.

Acupuncture has been used in China for centuries in order to regulate the female reproductive system. The effects include stimulating the secretion of gonadotrophin releasing hormone which influences the menstrual cycle, ovulation and fertility. It has also shown a marked improvement in the blood flow to the uterus as well as decreasing stress hormones which can affect success rate during the transfer.

Research shows how acupuncture done pre and post embryo transfer can improve your chances. A recent analysis carried out by Eric Manheimer published by the British Journal Medical in February 2008 indicates how women who have acupuncture on the same day as their embryo transfer have a higher chance of conceiving than those women who did not undergo acupuncture treatment. The treatment done prior to the transfer increases the arterial blood flow to the uterus which nourishes and supports the endometrium. In addition, the client is relaxed both on a physical and emotional level which is plays a vital role prior to the transfer.

Once the transfer is complete a further acupuncture treatment is done within a 24-hour period. In this treatment the aim is again to encourage a calm and relaxed environment in the uterus and ease any discomfort that may occur after the transfer. Specific acupuncture points are selected which encourages implantation of the egg and improving the condition of the endometrium. These points have also shown to have an affect on the immune system which may help reduce the risk of embryos being rejected by the uterus.

Embarking on IVF treatment is very stressful emotionally and physically, and therefore we encourage our clients to look at their lifestyle pattern, nutritional needs and emotional wellbeing before and during the treatment. Addressing these areas can help make the experience more manageable and ultimately improve your success rate.

At The Nature of Balance our aim is to treat you with individualized care and advice in a relaxed and caring environment, as well as provide the necessary support and encouragement you need during your IVF cycle. We would advise clients who are about to undergo IVF treatment in conjunction with acupuncture to visit the clinic a few weeks prior to the initial cycle, this way we can ensure optimal health and wellbeing.

For further reading: <http://www.bmj.com/content/336/7643/545.full.pdf>

For more information or to book an appointment please contact The Nature of Balance on +61 03 9682 8886 or email wellness@thenatureofbalance.com.au