

Infertility Treatment With Acupuncture & Chinese Medicine

At the Jace Wellness Center, we use Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) with Holistic Endocrinology to treat both female infertility and male sub-fertility conditions. It is common to see a 40-60% increase in IVF or Assisted Reproductive Techniques (ART) using natural treatments with conventional medicine. Currently, there are over a hundred herbal substances we use extensively in infertility treatments along with acupuncture, natural hormones, dietary and other therapies. We offer a viable alternative and complementary therapeutic system to conventional infertility treatments and ART.

Introduction

Traditional Chinese Medicine is a medical system that has enjoyed a 5000 year history in China. It is based on the principle of balance which states: Health is a result of mind and body homeostasis; disease arises due to hyper-functioning or hypo-functioning of the body systems which in turn causes or is the result of too much or too little substance. The objective of TCM is to return the body to its homeostatic state in which neither the function nor the substance is out of balance. TCM views infertility as a state of both weakened body and pathogenesis of the body. Infertility, therefore, is a condition of systemic imbalance and aging.

Acupuncture and Injection Therapy

Acupuncture is a therapy of inserting, manipulating, and retaining very fine needles in specific "points" of the body to solicit neurological, immunological, and endocrine responses. In Gynecology and male/female reproductive medicine, acupuncture has been utilized to manage pain such as in dysmenorrhea, endometriosis, mittelschmerz, premenstrual tension syndrome, breast pain, prostate pain and bladder pain. It is used to promote healing and hormonal regulation in prostatitis, chronic urinary bladder infection, uterine fibroids, dysfunctional uterine bleeding, anovulation, premature menopause, and menopausal symptoms. It is a safe and effective treatment. A selection of points will be utilized depending on the condition. In a given treatment, approximately 6 to 20 needles will be inserted and retained anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes. Occasionally we use superficial injections into the acupuncture points to enhance the treatment. Most patients feel a sense of deep relaxation after treatment. Some patients can feel energized, relief of pain and other symptoms immediately after the treatment.

Acupuncture Efficacy Studies

In animal studies done by the Nanjing College of Agriculture has found that acupuncture is effective in inducing ovulation in cows. Results from clinical outcome studies in China have shown effectiveness of acupuncture in promoting ovulation in secondary amenorrhea conditions. A study of 45 infertile women suffering from oligomenorrhea or luteal insufficiency receiving auricular acupuncture, a type of acupuncture in the ear, achieved comparable pregnancy rate as to various hormonal treatments of bromocriptine, dexamethasone, levothyroxine, clomiphene, gonadotropins with combination of homologous inseminations and in vitro fertilization. Side effects were observed only with hormonal treatment and not in the acupuncture group. Acupuncture was shown to induce more physiological menstrual cycles than those induced by hormone therapy. There was

also lower miscarriage rate in acupuncture patients compared to higher miscarriage rate with patients using clomiphene citrate and gonadotropins. Based on the data, though a small, selected population, acupuncture seems to potentially offer a viable alternative therapy for female infertility due to hormone disorders.

Herbal Therapy

Herbal therapies are widely used for many conditions in Internal Medicine, Gynecology and Pediatrics. There are now over ten thousand herbal substances documented in the *Materia Medica*, published by the Ministry of Health of China. A Majority of these substances are from plant sources and have been found through years of experimentation and usage to be effective for specific conditions. Chinese herbs are usually used in combination of 8 to 20 herbs and are customarily formulated for an individual patient's specific condition. It is therefore common to have variations in herbal formulas from patient to patient in the clinical setting. The herbs are dispensed in powder form to be mixed with water 3x day. The formula changes throughout the cycle and as the patient progresses with treatment. Herbs have many strengthening as well as potential therapeutic effects. Herbs contain many different varieties of nutrients and vitamins which are essential to the body. Studies from China have suggested treatment effectiveness in the areas of luteal phase defect, endometriosis, immunological infertility and male subfertility.

Working with Assisted Reproductive Technologies

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Natural Medicine can be used solely or in conjunction with Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) and fertility drugs. Most patients use TCM as their primary treatment modalities in Asia. In the western clinical setting, it is not uncommon to see patients use Natural Medicine and TCM in conjunction with fertility drug and ART.

Benefits of TCM treatment

The following are some of the preliminary results from our clinic. We have found increased follicular development with some patients in an ART cycle with combination of TCM, natural hormones, and fertility drugs especially in ones who were labeled as "poor responders". This can be seen in either an increased production of eggs in GIFT/IVF or increased fertilization rate in IVF. Patients who have a thin endometrial lining during the usage of Clomiphene Citrate in an IUI cycle have found natural medicine helpful in normalizing the endometrium. We also have found some patients who have stopped ART due to symptoms of premature menopause as well as elevated FSH levels have "bounced" back with utilization of TCM. Most women with irregular menstruation or dysmenorrhea have found TCM to be helpful in managing symptoms as well as regulating the menstrual cycle. In the area of recurrent pregnancy loss, some patients were able to conceive again and were able to carry to term without any immunosuppressants. In male subfertility conditions, we have found some cases of improved semen analysis with the use of TCM for more than three months. Additional improvements can be seen in increased vitality and libido.