

Acupuncture Reduces Stress For IVF Fertility Treatment

Published by [HealthCMI](#) on 03 April 2015.



Acupuncture reduces stress for women undergoing in vitro fertilization (IVF). Research in *Fertility and Sterility*, an American Society For Reproductive Medicine publication, measured the dose dependent effect of acupuncture on stress for women undergoing IVF. They discovered that elevated stress levels persist in women receiving only a single acupuncture treatment on the day of embryo transfer. However, stress reduced

significantly for women receiving several acupuncture treatments prior to the day of embryo transfer.

The researchers note that “acupuncture appears to be a promising stress-lowering tool for women undergoing IVF.” The research suggests a dose dependent effect. The study compared women receiving a single acupuncture treatment on the day of embryo transfer with those receiving several acupuncture treatments over a period of time greater than one month. The researchers note that one acupuncture treatment was not clinically significant but that “when undergoing multiple acupuncture sessions, stress scores were significantly lower.” Citing research on the impact of lowering stress on fertility procedure positive patient outcomes, the researchers recommend additional studies on acupuncture’s effects on fertility outcomes.

A related study was published recently finding that in vitro fertilization (IVF) live birth success rates may increase with Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) therapies, including both acupuncture and herbal medicine. A meta-analysis of over 1,200 IVF patient records was examined. Application of TCM modalities was associated with a significant increase in the live birth rate. The live birth rate was increased for both fresh donor and non-donor IVF embryo transfers.

Another recent study found a positive correlation between the application of acupuncture and stress reduction. Acupuncture was found to successfully improve sleep quality and reduce both stress and depression in the elderly. Published in *Neuroscience Letters*, researchers note that “the rigorous methodology employed in this study ensured the reliability of the results concerning the improved sleep quality and relaxation effects involved with acupuncture during aging.” The researchers add that electroacupuncture “had a faster onset of action, better response rate, and better improvement



rate than fluoxetine, indicating that acupuncture can be a good intervention method for ameliorating psychological distress and depressive symptoms, thereby promoting relaxation and well-being.”

The effects of stress on positive patient outcomes has garnered great interest in the scientific community. As research continues to demonstrate improved positive patient outcomes associated with stress reduction, the efforts for integrating stress reduction modalities into standard protocols of care appears likely to increase. The recent findings on acupuncture for stress reduction suggest that acupuncture may help provide important therapeutic interventions for patients.

References:

Sutton, C., S. Pentland, and J. Roberts. "A Comparison of Stress Levels in Women Undergoing Single Versus Multiple Acupuncture Session Prior to Embryo Transfer." *Fertility and Sterility* 103, no. 2 (2015): e36-e37.

Author Affiliations:

Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC.

Yinstill Reproductive Wellness, Traditional Chinese Medicine, Vancouver, BC.

Pacific Centre for Reproductive Medicine, Burnaby, BC.

Rubin, Lee E. Hullender, Michael S. Opsahl, Klaus Wiemer, Scott D. Mist, and Aaron B. Caughey. "Impact of whole systems traditional Chinese medicine on in vitro fertilization outcomes." *Reproductive BioMedicine Online* (2015).

Zuppa, Carina, Carine H. do Prado, Andrea Wieck, Aline Zaparte, Andressa Barbosa, and Moisés Evandro Bauer. "Acupuncture for sleep quality, BDNF levels and immunosenescence: A randomized controlled study." *Neuroscience letters* 587 (2015): 35-40.