Original papers

Effect of acupuncture on assisted reproduction treatment outcomes

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Contributors CM, designed the manuscript, performed the acupuncture, analysed the data and revised the final version; DPAFB, analysed the data, wrote the manuscript; RDCSF, collected the data, analysed the data and revised the final version of the manuscript; AI analysed the data and revised the final version of the manuscript; EB supervised all the work and revised the manuscript.

Accepted 22 July 2010
Published Online First 18 October 2010

Abstract

Background Acupuncture has recently been used as a complementary technique in the management of infertility. It has physiological and psychological effects and may be considered an alternative for stress reduction in women undergoing infertility treatments.

Objective To examine the hypothesis that acupuncture treatment may increase the pregnancy rate in patients undergoing intracytoplasmic sperm injection cycles.

Methods Patients enrolled in the study were stratified according to age and randomised to either a control group (n=208) or acupuncture group, (n=208). The pregnancy, implantation and abortion rates of the two groups were compared.

Results No influence of acupuncture treatment on clinical outcomes was seen; however, when cycles in which the causes of infertility were exclusively tubal-uterine or idiopathic were evaluated separately, a positive influence of acupuncture on pregnancy (OR=5.15, 95% CI 1.03 to 34.5; p=0.048) was noted. Moreover, trends toward an increase in implantation were seen when acupuncture was performed (regression coefficient: 0.645; p=0.092).

Conclusion The results suggest that acupuncture treatment had no influence when performed immediately before and immediately after embryo transfer, on clinical outcomes overall. In a subgroup analysis, when the embryo was not affected by an ovarian or seminal influence, a benefit was noted.