



Acupuncture Herbs Nutrition Massage Pregnancy

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Process

Conception, pregnancy and parturition are a process. One definition of process is "a series of actions, changes, or functions bringing about a result". Any natural process is better in every way than an artificial one. A good example is cooking. There is the process of cooking which is a slow, mindful act and there is microwave cooking which is basically a non-participatory act without natural process. There is no relationship between the chef and the outcome of the meal. Which meal tastes better? And which is healthier to eat?

The process of conception is quite complicated and requires the perfect balance and function of many components all working in a coordinated and harmonious fashion. Sperm must be attracted to egg, it must find the egg, and it must penetrate the egg. The egg has to be high quality and so too must be the sperm. The lining must have qualitative integrity. The embryo must find the lining and must be able to penetrate it. The placenta must develop and nourish the developing fetus and rid the fetus of waste matter. The placenta must protect the fetus from immunological attack. The cytokines, proteins, immune function, blood flow, glycoproteins, hormones must all be in balance and not under or over functioning. There must be absence of pathological mitigators which can contribute to infertility or promote miscarriage. Each and every player in the orchestra of conception must be in tune. One sour note and pregnancy will not occur or miscarriage will ensue.

Chinese medicine which consists mainly of acupuncture and herbal medicine does not work by adding to that which is deficient or reducing that which is in excess; Western medicine is good at that. For example, a common practice in treating a deficiency syndrome, i.e., hypothyroidism is to ADD synthroid. Or a common

method at reducing excess insulin is by prescribing Metformin. These medicines which add or suppress or reduce have changed the face of civilization. Without the intervention of Western medicine and surgery our life-span would probably not exceed 40 years of age and three million babies would not have been born as a result of IVF. How many couples however, have remained childless even though they have undergone multiple IVFs? I am guessing more than three million.

Here is why

Just as a microwave oven can cook a meal, IVF can create a baby. But, as the microwave does not supplant the relationship between the chef and the food and the *process* of creating a meal, IVF cannot, in all its glory, in all cases, replace the *natural* process which is necessary to occur for conception and a take-home-baby to ensue.

The alternative

Acupuncture and herbal medicine are essentially used to create a state as close to homeostasis as possible. Homeostasis is when everything in the body and mind work perfectly. Obviously, this is not attainable. But acupuncture and herbs attempt this and by attempting it a greater state of systemic and psycho-emotional health is frequently achieved. This is why, in many cases, acupuncture and herbs work to help one achieve pregnancy when IVF fails. Because the greater one's physical and psycho-emotional health is, the more likely they will be to conceive and deliver.

Based upon fourteen years of clinical experience in the field of infertility it is my professional opinion that the best case scenario for the infertile patient is to utilize Western medicine in conjunction with acupuncture and herbal medicine. The reason for this is

quite simple. When the reproductive endocrinologist retrieves eggs and fertilizes them with sperm the resulting embryo is as good as its constituent components, egg and sperm. Most IVFs that fail do so because of poor egg quality and/or poor sperm quality. The reproductive endocrinologist cannot improve egg or sperm quality; acupuncture and herbs frequently can.

Blood

I saw a thirty-four-year-old patient today. She has conceived three times with intercourse only to miscarry each time. She did get pregnant and delivered a baby as a result of insemination. She had one subsequent failed IVF. Now her doctor recommends donor egg with IVF. The patient has cold hands and feet, a pale complexion, low energy and gets dizzy. Obviously she has poor hemodynamics.

Blood is what carries FSH and LH from the brain to the ovaries; blood nourishes the endometrial lining; blood carries oxygen, electrolytes and nutrition to the entire reproductive system and removes waste matter from the reproductive environment. When cells die which they constantly do, they are 'eaten' up by macrophages. If the immune function is not functioning normally and debris is not removed, the outer layer of the dead cells breach and the internal toxic substance circulates within the ovarian milieu causing degradation in ovarian/egg quality. Acupuncture and herbal medicine increase blood flow; as a result this- can in many instances improve the health and function of the target tissue: ovaries and endometrial lining.

Why are you not using acupuncture and herbs?

It is difficult for me to understand why *all* infertile patients don't include acupuncture and herbal medicine in their protocols. Why would they not? There has been so much research elucidating the efficacy of acupuncture in the treatment of infertility that acupuncture is no longer referred to as 'alternative' medicine but rather 'complementary' medicine. Herbs have a three-thousand year history of positive clinical outcomes.

Herb safety

Regarding the safety profile of herbs I have this to say: there are at least one million hospitalizations per year in America alone which occur as a result of adverse reactions to Western medicine. Many of these hospitalizations result in death. This does not happen with herbal medicine.

It is ironic therefore, that many (but no longer all!) doctors don't want their patients on herbs because "they don't know what's in them". Do you know what's in Lupron? Or Gonal F? Did you know that ovarian hyper stimulation even from clomid can be fatal?

Don't misunderstand, I am 100% pro IUI, IVF and donor egg-IVF protocols. But to not partake of a modality with proven results which may change the course from a negative outcome to a positive one especially in the patient who has had multiple IUI/IVF failures is a clinical error.