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DOES A COMBINATION OF CHINESE HERBS AND ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT AFFECT SPERM DENSITY IN MALES WITH LOW SPERM COUNT? A PILOT STUDY

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Our study aimed to determine whether a combination of Chinese herbs and acupuncture might affect sperm characteristics. The study group consisted on 12 patients, who failed to conceive in at least three previous intra cytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) attempts. Couples were diagnosed according to the eight principles of the Chinese Medicine. Administration of herbs and acupuncture treatments, were given accordingly. Sperm analyses of each patient were compared before and during the treatment. Outcomes were compared with sperm characteristics of 19 patients of the control group, who underwent two sperm analyses during four months period of time. A higher rate of normal sperm morphology was noticed in the study group after a mean of 39.58±9.3 days of treatment using a paired T-Test (14.17%±6.4 vs 26.58%±11.7, respectively; $t_{11}=-3.365$, $p<.006$. No change was noticed in the rate of normal forms in the control group (21.9%±10.4 vs 25.26% ±10.29). A difference was also noticed in the volume of the ejaculate after treatment (1.5±0.56 vs. 2.08±1.16 ml; $t_{11}=-2.184$ $p<0.05$). Additionally, six pregnancies were achieved following our combined Chinese treatment with ART, five of which resulted in successful deliveries, one still ongoing and one ectopic. We concluded that a combination of acupuncture and Chinese herbs may be a useful, supporting treatment for males and couples who failed to conceive in IVF and intend to undergo further fertility treatments.

Recent Publications

1. Ménéz Y and Barak Y (2000) Comparison between day-2 embryos obtained either from ICSI or resulting from short insemination IVF: Influence of maternal age. *Human Reproduction* 15(8):1776-80.
2. Tarlatzis B C, Goulis D G, Zepiridis L, Pagou T, Chatziioannou E, et al. (2006) The effects of

sperm quality on embryo development after intracytoplasmic sperm injection. *J Assist Reprod Genet.* 23(2):69-74.

3. Miller J E and Smith T (2001) The effect of intracytoplasmic sperm injection and semen parameters on blastocyst development *in vitro*. *Hum Reprod.* 16(5):918-24.
4. Bartoov B, Berkovitz A, Eltes F, Kogosowski A, Menezes Y and Barak Y (2002) Real-time fine morphology of motile human sperm cells is associated with IVF-ICSI outcome. *J Androl.* 23(1):1-8.
5. Hazout A, Dumont-Hassan M, Junca AM, Cohen Bacrie P and Tesarik J (2006) High-magnification ICSI overcomes paternal effect resistant to conventional ICSI. *Reprod Biomed Online* 12(1):19-25.

Biography

Tal Bello has completed his Diplomate in Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine at College of Complementary Medicine, Israel, and Master of Oriental Medicine at Maryland Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine in 2001. He has completed an Internship in Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Medicine at Chengdu University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, China. He is working as an Academic Director in Complementary Medicine at Givat Washington College, Gadera, Israel and Principle Teacher of Gynecology, Pediatrics and Clinical Program, Kibbutzim College of Education, Tel Aviv, Israel. He worked as an Academic Director and Senior Lecturer for Medical Acupuncture for Physicians at Barzilai Hospital, Ashkelon, Israel from 2005 to 2007. He has private clinical practice in Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine, Tel Aviv, Israel.

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