



WOMEN'S HEALTH

Effects of Acupuncture on In Vitro Fertilization Outcomes

Editorial Staff | DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

In vitro fertilization (IVF) is an option for couples unable to have a child in the conventional fashion, but that doesn't mean IVF is always successful. While IVF can lead to a pregnancy, it is estimated that success rates are well below 50% globally. There are also risks associated with the procedure, including miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy and ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome, among others. Thus, rates of fertilization and rates of live births may differ.

New research suggests acupuncture can help women undergoing IVF become pregnant and deliver a child - at higher rates than women not receiving acupuncture. In the review study, published in *Archives of Gynecology and Obstetrics*, researchers analyzed 25 trials involving 4,757 total patients. Pregnancy outcomes evaluated in the studies were clinical pregnancy rate and live birth rate.

Findings from the analysis showed that the pooled clinical pregnancy rate of all acupuncture groups was significantly higher than control groups (43.6% vs. 33.2%), while the pooled live birth rate was likewise significantly higher in acupuncture vs. control groups (38.0% vs. 28.7%).

According to the review authors, "Different acupuncture methods (manual acupuncture, electrical acupuncture and transcutaneous acupoint electrical stimulation), acupuncture time (before or during the time of controlled ovarian hyperstimulation and around the time of embryo transfer), and acupuncture courses (at least 4 sessions and less than 4 sessions) have respectively positive effects on IVF outcomes."

Source: Xu M, Zhu M, Zheng C. Effects of acupuncture on pregnancy outcomes in women undergoing in vitro fertilization: an updated systematic review and meta-analysis. *Arch Gynecol Obstet*, 2023 July 12 (online ahead of print).

