

Acupuncture and In Vitro Fertilisation: Recent Research

In 2002 Wolfgang Paulus (et al) published research that looked into the effects of acupuncture when given before and after Embryo Transfer.

Paulus WE, Zhang M, Stehler E, El-Danasouri I, Sterzik K. Influence of acupuncture on the pregnancy rate in patients who undergo assisted reproduction therapy. Fertil Steril, Apr 2002;77:721-724.



What was the research?

The research involved 160 women that were assigned randomly into an acupuncture (n=80) group and a control (n=80) group. The results were statistically significant (could not have been caused by chance) and showed that implantation rates could be increased by as much as 60% with acupuncture either side of embryo transfer (ET).

Further studies Since 2002 there have a number of other research projects that have explored the use of the Paulus protocol. Most were attempts to explore if it was possible to improve implantation rates further and to observe acupuncture's benefits on other aspects of fertility and pregnancy. Some of the most relevant are:

Quintero et al (2004) used the similar principles to Paulus but chose different points and used them 48hrs after day 3 ET's to see what the effects would be on implantation rates if used closer to the time of implantation. Once again they discovered that implantation rates were increased by about 60%.

Westergaard et al (2006) tried to see if further acupuncture sessions around the time of implantation would increase pregnancy rates further. They did this by using acupuncture again 2 days after the post ET treatment. They found that it had similar results but that it didn't add

any further benefit.

Magarelli P. and Cridennda D. (2005) studied the effects of the Paulus protocol on live birth rates reported that miscarriage rates were almost halved when the protocol was used 24hrs before ET.