

# Acupuncture for Promoting Ovulation

Over the past couple of years, there has been an ever-increasing interest in acupuncture as an adjunctive modality in assisted reproductive technologies (ART). On page 79 of issue #4, 2008 of *Xin Zhong Yi (New Chinese Medicine)*, Liang Ji-yuan *et al.* published an article titled “Clinical Observations on the Use of an Acupuncture Supplementing & Regulating the Chong Method for Promoting Ovulation.” Because this is such a popular topic, a summary of this article is presented below.

## **Cohort description:**

Altogether, there were 70 women enrolled in this two-wing comparison study, all of whom had been married for two years or more and, while having normal sexual relations with their husbands, had not gotten pregnant. Based on examination, it was determined that all these women suffered from ovulatory function disturbance infertility. These women were randomly divided into two groups, a treatment group of 38 and a comparison group of 32.

## **Treatment method:**

1. All members of the comparison group were treated with 50 milligrams of clomiphene once per day for a continuous five days.
2. All members of the treatment group were treated with the following acupuncture protocol beginning on the fifth day of their menstrual cycle and continuing once per day for five days up to day 10 in their cycle. The seven points needled each day consisted of:

San Yin Jiao (Sp 6)

Guan Yuan (CV 4)

Zhong Ji (CV 3)

Qi Hai (CV 6)

Xue Hai (Sp 10)

Shen Shu (Bl 23)

Ming Men (GV 4)

San Yin Jiao, Xue Hai, and Shen Shu were all needled bilaterally. San Yin Jiao, Guan Yuan, Zhong Ji, and Shen Shu were needled with a two-inch needle to a depth of 1.5 inches perpendicularly to the level where the qi was obtained. Xue Hai, Qi Hai, and Ming Men were needled with a 1.5 inch needle to a depth of one inch where the qi was also obtained. Hand technique consisted of twisting and twirling and lifting and thrusting supplementing technique,

with stimulation being carried out every five minutes. The needles were left in place for 30 minutes each treatment. In addition, a TDP heat lamp was also used on Shen Shu. Three months of treatment equaled one course of therapy, and two courses were administered.

**Study outcomes:**

“Effective” meant that ultrasonography showed ovulation. “Ineffective” meant that ultrasonography did not show ovulation. Based on these criteria, there was a 89.4% effectiveness rate in the treatment group as compared to only a 75.0% effectiveness rate in the comparison group. The following chart shows the effectiveness rates of the two groups in terms of effect after number of courses of treatment.

Group	Number of cases	Effect after one course	Effect after two courses	No effect	Effectiveness rate
Treatment (acupuncture)	38	12	22	4	89.4%
Comparison (clomiphene)	32	8	16	8	75.0%

**Discussion:**

According to the authors of this article, anovulation affects 38.6% of women suffering from infertility. The Western medical treatment of anovulation is clomiphene. However, long-term large doses of clomiphene result in a high rate of multiple pregnancies (twins, triplets, etc.), enlargement of the ovaries, and facial flushing and is prohibited in those with liver and kidney dysfunction.

In Chinese medicine, it is said the kidney qi being exuberant, the tian kui arriving, the ren mai freely flowing, and the tai chong mai being exuberant are the basis of female fertility. It is the kidneys, tian kui, chong and ren, and the uterus which mainly produce the menstrual cycle, and the kidneys are the root of menstruation. According to Liu Jing-jun, “The kidneys, tian kui, chong and ren, and uterus are closely associated with hypothalamus-pituitary-ovarian function.” Therefore, the authors think that anovulatory infertility should be handled via the kidneys. Thus the above acupuncture protocol is based on the treatment principles of coursing the liver and supplementing the kidneys, regulating and rectifying the chong and ren. The course of treatment with this protocol is relatively short and the therapeutic effects are high with no side effects. In fact, this protocol gets better outcomes than clomiphene, yet is completely safe.

**Copyright © Blue Poppy Press, 2008. All rights reserved.**