THE IMPACT OF ACUPUNCTURE ON IVF SUCCESS RATES: A RANDOMISED CONTROLLED TRAIL

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Abstract

Clinical trials assessing benefits of acupuncture on IVF have differed in study design, protocol, outcome measures and commercial bias. This heterogeneity precluding firm conclusion regarding the efficacy of acupuncture in this field. To address this, international acupuncturists experienced treating women during IVF participated in Delphi questionnaires and reached a consensus protocol to be used in future research (Smith et al 2012). This was the first study to use this agreed standard protocol.

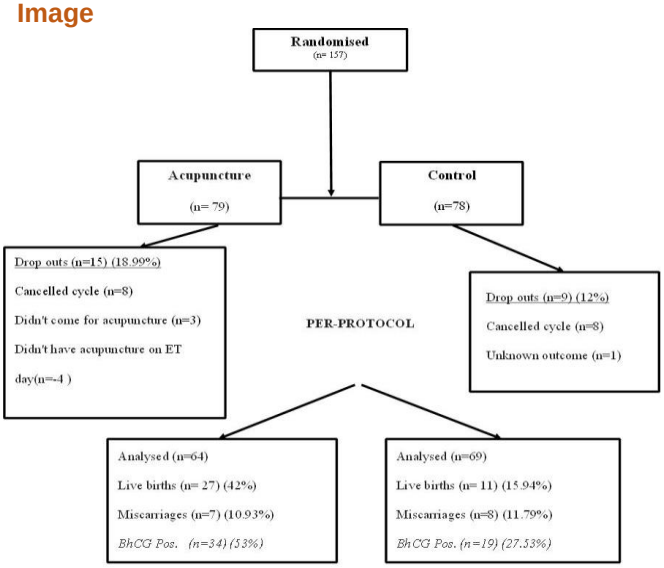
This was an RCT, in which 157 women were randomised to receive either acupuncture treatment three times in the treatment cycle in addition to our standard IVF protocol (n=79) or no acupuncture treatment (n=78). All women in the study were undergoing their 1st or 2nd IVF cycle, were 23-43 years old with BMI<30. Those randomised to the study group (n=79) received acupuncture based on the Delphi consensus protocol, between days 6-8 of ovarian stimulation and twice on the day of embryo transfer before and after transfer. The IVF practitioner was blinded to the randomisation. The primary end point was live birth.

15/79 women in the intervention group withdrew from the study (did not complete the acupuncture treatment or had cancelled cycles) compared to 9/78 women from the control group (P <0.001). A per-protocol analysis revealed that the rate of live births (27/64, 42% vs 11/69, 15.94% P=0.03) and positive pregnancy tests (34/64, 53% vs 19/69, 27.53% ,) were significantly higher in the acupuncture group compared with the control group (p<0.005).

The results of this study imply that acupuncture may be offered as a possible method of improving IVF outcome. This study was the first to follow a widely approved consensus protocol hoping to settle disagreement in the literature and resolve previous disparity.

Key words: IVF; acupuncture; live-birth; pregnancy rate

Image



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Biography

Karin Gillerman obtained her training (LAc, BSc with honor) from the Israeli college of integrative medicine 1998. She specialized in TCM for women health and gynecology and further specialized in acupuncture to support IVF and infertility (PCOM, NY). She practices acupuncture in the UK (NHS and private fertility clinics) and leads a RCT at the HUH. She teaches and lectures worldwide and participated as a speaker in international medical conferences. Her unique approach is to integrate acupuncture with western medicine as to support fertility treatments and improve their outcome.

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