

4 November 2011

Pregnancy rates double with Chinese medicine

Women receiving Chinese herbal medicine are twice as likely to get pregnant than those receiving Western medical fertility treatment, according to new research.

Researchers at the University of Adelaide reviewed a range of studies which in total had involved 1,851 women aged from 18 to 45 years who had received treatment for infertility. They found Chinese herbal medicine achieved on average a 60% fertility rate, compared with 30% for standard Western medical drug treatment or IVF. The reasons for infertility in the women included endometriosis, PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome), amenorrhea and advanced maternal age. The results are published in the December issue of the journal *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*.

The researchers reviewed seven RCTs, one non-randomised controlled trial, 13 cohort studies, three case series and six case studies. In these studies, women received either Chinese herbal medicine alone, Chinese herbal medicine and acupuncture, or Chinese herbal medicine in conjunction with Western drugs or surgery.

In the cases of Chinese herbal medicine being used alone the researchers concluded that pregnancy rates were significantly higher than with the sole use of Western medical fertility treatment. The same improvement in pregnancy rates was true when Chinese herbal medicine was used in conjunction with Western drugs or surgery. It was also noted in some trials that Chinese herbal medicine had fewer side effects than Western medical treatments.

Emma Farrant, chief executive officer of the Register of Chinese Herbal Medicine says, "Clinical experience has shown that Chinese medicine is very effective at treating infertility in women. While there are some weaknesses to this review, overall the results are very encouraging and we hope it will lead to further well-designed and rigorous trials."

Members of the public who are interested in Chinese medicine fertility treatment are urged to only seek treatment from a practitioner who is a member of a reputable professional body. The RCHM was set up in 1987 to self-regulate the practice of Chinese herbal medicine amongst its members. For information about the RCHM, please visit www.rchm.co.uk or call 01603 623994.

Ends

For media enquiries, contact Sue Flook on 01453 790821/07788 154753 or sue@furnercommunications.co.uk

Source:

Ried K, Stuart K. Efficacy of Traditional Chinese Herbal Medicine in the management of female infertility: A systematic review. *Complement Ther Med* (2011) Dec;19(6):319-31

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22036524?dopt=Abstract>