



CASE REPORT – ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT IN MALE INFERTILITY DUE TO ASTHENOZOOSPERMIA

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ABSTRACT

When it comes to fertility issues in couples, both male and female partners can be affected by infertility. 25 – 30% of the infertility cases are due to male factor. Acupuncture as a treatment for male infertility can help the couples to increase the ability to conceive, correct the imbalances in the body and increase the sperm motility. In the research is presented a case of 37 year old male patient, diagnosed with asthenozoospermia. The patient was treated with acupuncture treatment and no additional treatments were made or any other medications taken. 8 treatments were done, two times monthly, in a period of 4 months. With the acupuncture treatment the sperm motility was increased and improved, the morphology was normalized, the number of the sperm with irregular morphology and changes in the head, neck and tail were reduced, the total number sperm was increased and the pH value of the sperm was normalized. In the pregnancy process, the acupuncture treatment as part of the TCM is a very helpful and effective treatment in improving and supporting the male factor i.e. the male infertility causes while eliminating the blockages and stagnancies from the meridians in the whole body. The results of the case report support the significance of the acupuncture treatment in male patients struggling with infertility due to asthenozoospermia.

KEYWORDS: Infertility, asthenozoospermia, acupuncture, traditional Chinese medicine.

INTRODUCTION

When it comes to fertility issues in couples, both male and female partners can be affected by infertility. 25 – 30% of the infertility cases are due to male factor. Factors that may contribute male infertility are: stress, injuries, sexual diseases, poor diet, smoking, drinking alcohol, endocrine disorders, exhaustion and other.^{[1],[2]}

For fertilization, most important index and most vital is the sperm motility level, as only the motile sperm can reach through the female reproductive tract and fertilize the egg cells. Asthenozoospermia is a condition characterized by reduced sperm motility with less than 40%, and represents a common cause of male infertility. Low sperm motility is frequently accompanied with oligospermia (a condition called oligoasthenozoospermia) and is often associated with mixed picture of morphologic defects i.e. defective spermiogenesis.^[2-4]

The medical treatment options are pretty limited. There are some drugs that may be used to increase the sperm motility, but when the drugs are stopped, the sperm motility decreases too. Acupuncture as a treatment for

male infertility can help the couples to increase the ability to conceive, boost the male fertility, correct the imbalances in the body, correct the semen abnormalities in concentration, increase the sperm motility and sperm concentration, significantly increase the percentage of morphologically normal sperm.

Acupuncture can be also used in combination with moxa or mixed herbs and give excellent results in patients diagnosed with infertility. In the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the acupuncture points are chosen individually for each patient, based on the diagnosis according to symptoms, syndromes or signs.^{[1],[2],[5],[6]}

Besides using the acupuncture and Chinese herbs as part of TCM to treat male infertility issues, some basic lifestyle changes can also help in improving sperm quality. Some of those changes include minimizing stress, maintaining a normal body weight, and reducing scrotal temperature.^[6]

CASE REPORT

In the research is presented a case of 37 year old male patient, diagnosed with asthenozoospermia. The

patients was treated with acupuncture treatment and no additional treatments were made or any other medications taken. 8 treatments were done, two times monthly, in a period of 4 months. The treatments were done indoor with duration of 35-40 minutes. The 0.25x25mm dimension fine sterile needles were used in the treatment. The treatments were made in clinic for Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture in Skopje, Macedonia by a MD, PhD, TCM specialist.

The acupuncture points used in the treatment are: DU1 (ChangQiang), ST26 (WaiLing), DU20 (BaiHui), N12 (ZhongWan), ST25 (TianShu), RN6 (QiHai), RN1 (HuiYin), RN4 (GuanYuan), BL32 (CiLiao), BL28 (PangGuangShu), LI4 (HeGu), PC6 (NeiGuan), ST36 (ZuSanLi), KI3 (TaiXi), SP9 (YinLingQuan), GB34

(YangLingQuan), SP6 (SanYinJiao), LR3 (TaiChong) and KI1 (YongQuan).

In table 1 are presented the results before and after the treatment. The positive changes in the semen quality and quantity were achieved in a period of 4 months with only 8 acupuncture treatments. It usually takes around 90 days for the new sperm to be created.

With the acupuncture treatment the sperm motility was increased and improved, the morphology was normalized, the number of the sperm with irregular morphology and changes in the head, neck and tail were reduced, the total number sperm was increased and the pH value of the sperm was normalized.

Table 1: Sperm analysis results before and after the treatment.

Analysis	Before	After	Ref. Value
Volume	3.5	2.9	> 1.5 ml
Liquefaction	Final	Final	Final
pH	8.0	7.5	7.2-7.8
Color	Pale yellow	Pale yellow	
Viscosity	Normal	Normal	Normal
Microscopic evaluation of native sperm			
Mobile	11%	38%	>25%
Linear	/	10%	>4%
Mobile in place	4%	8%	>6%
Immobile	59%	44%	<45%
Degree of mobility	3	3	3 or 4
Total number of sperm	37.8 x10 ⁶ /ml	45x10 ⁶ /ml	>40x10 ⁶ /ml
Sperm morphology			
Normal	8	62	>50%
Head changes	52	11	
Neck changes	32	15	
Tail changes	6	10	
Cytoplasmic residue	2	2	
Leukocytes	3		
Round bodies	5		
Agglutination	No	No	(no or 0-10)

Acupuncture, as part of TCM, is used to improve the smooth Qi flow and to achieve balanced state of yin and yang in all the organs. By balancing the yin and yang energy in the organs, the individual's body constitution is improved, thereby leading to better quality sperm production. Qi is the vital energy circulating through the whole body through eridians. A healthy body should have a proper Qi circulation and if there are any blockages or disruptions in the Qi flow, it will cause diseases.

According to the theories of TCM, most common causes of male infertility are deficiency in Qi and blood, blood stasis, liver qi stagnation, kidney weakness or blockages of the meridians due to phlegm and dampness.

Deficiency syndrome includes fatigue, frequent urination, impotence, aching of the back and legs. The

treatment aim here is to nourish the kidney yin and to build strong qi and blood in the body.

Stagnancy syndrome is mainly caused by blood stasis or liver qi stagnation, which is caused by high levels of stress. Stagnancy syndrome is characterized by digestive disorders, abdominal bloating, pain and tense muscles.

Blockage syndrome includes blockage of meridians due to blood stasis, phlegm or dampness produced by deficiency in the spleen. Therefore, the aim of the treatment is to strengthen the spleen to remove phlegm and dampness. Blockage due to blood stasis often occurs after surgery, injury or severe infection.^[6]

TCM provides a natural and non-invasive way to enhance the semen parameters, giving hope for male fertility. The treatment improves the delivery of nutrients

to develop the sperm and promote optimal sperm vitality.^[7]

The results of the case report support the significance of the acupuncture treatment in male patients struggling with infertility due to asthenozoospermia.

CONCLUSION

In the pregnancy process, the acupuncture treatment as part of the TCM is a very helpful and effective treatment in improving and supporting the male factor i.e. the male infertility causes while eliminating the blockages and stagnancies from the meridians in the whole body.

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Conflict of interest

The author have declared that no competing interests exist.

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Statement of Informed Consent

Written informed consent was obtained from the patient for their anonymized information to be published in this article.

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