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MEDICAL CENTER STUDY CONFIRMS ACUPUNCTURE INCREASES IN VITRO PREGNANCIES

In vitro fertilization requires the investment of a good deal of effort and expense into the process of achieving pregnancy for couples who have problems with conception. But for the 10 to 15 percent of couples who experience reproductive difficulties and turn for help to specialized fertility treatment methods, it's something they are willing to do to bring a new life into their family.

A survey was recently undertaken to determine if Acupuncture is a complementary approach to improve the success rate of in vitro fertilization. The study was undertaken at the University of Maryland School of Medicine's Center for Integrative Medicine. Eric Manheimer of the Center and colleagues conducted a systematic review spurred on by the fact that Acupuncture has been used in China for centuries to help regulate the female reproductive system.

With this in mind, the review team analyzed the results of seven different clinical trials of women who had undergone in vitro fertilization. They wanted to see if pregnancy results were improved through the use of Acupuncture. The study looked into the data of some 1,366 women. The comparisons were drawn between those women who had received Acupuncture treatment within one day of embryo transfer and those who did not. Assessments were made against those who had either received sham Acupuncture or no additional treatment.

The reviewers found from their analysis that Acupuncture, given as a complement to in vitro fertilization, increased the odds of achieving pregnancy over sham treatment or no treatment at all. The researchers said the results indicated that one additional pregnancy would result for every 10 women who received Acupuncture. While the researchers did indicate that more study needs to be done into this area, the findings did show an increased pregnancy rate of 10 percent with Acupuncture.

The results of this study were published recently on-line by the *British Medical Journal*.

University of Maryland School of Medicine's Center for Integrative Medicine is one of two schools that shared in a \$1.1 million grant in 2005 to examine the role Acupuncture plays in improving pregnancy rates among couples who try in vitro fertilization. The center received \$400,000 of that grant money from the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, a division of the National Institutes of Health.