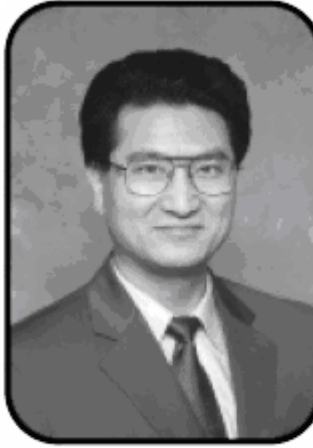




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## **Acupuncture for Infertility Cure**

**-----L-C Natural Fertility Treatment Program**

**By Dr. (Diana) Tong Li and Dr. Franklyn Chen**

Infertility is usually defined as the inability to achieve viable pregnancy (a pregnancy resulting in live birth) after twelve months of regular unprotected intercourse.

Female factor issues account for approximately 35 to 40 percent of fertility problems. Male factor issues account for about 30 to 35 percent of known fertility problems. An estimated 15 to 25 percent of fertility problems include the combination of both male and female factor issues, while 10 percent remain undiagnosed.

Infertility affects many couples during the reproductive age. Some research shows that one out of six couples trying to have children experience problems with infertility. Infertility can also have a strong impact psychologically as it can lead to feelings of isolation and personal failure.

For thousands of years acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) professionals have addressed a whole range of female and male reproductive issues and hormonal problems with excellent results.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine it is believed that infertility is caused by patterns of disharmony of Qi (vital energy or life force), yin and yang, blood and body fluids, which may also cause disharmony in the different internal organs, such as the kidney, spleen, liver and heart. These disharmonies can cause infertility problems for both male and female.

Traditional Chinese Medicine treats infertility on the basis of a careful differential diagnosis to resolve underlying patterns of disharmony. There is either a "deficient" condition that leads to poor nourishment of the body and organs or an "excess" condition that obstructs the organs and meridians (energy channels).

Many infertility couples, after going through Western medicine testing have been told there were no physical reasons for the infertility. But, from the traditional Chinese medicine point of view, patients may have an imbalance within the body which does not show in western medical testing, which can cause infertility problems. The major imbalances of the internal organs that are directly related to infertility are that of the kidney, liver, spleen and heart. TCM treatments for infertility are concentrated on these issues.

According to TCM theory each organ is looked upon as a complex system encompassing its anatomical entity which provide total integration of bodily functions, emotions, mental activities, tissues, sense organs and environmental influences. Additionally these correspond to the hormonal, reproductive, circulation systems etc., whereas, in Western medicine each individual organ is seen only in its material-anatomical aspect.

## **Kidney**

According to TCM the kidneys store vital essence, and are in charge of growth, development and reproduction of the body. The kidney also influences the body fluids, dominate bone and manufacture marrow, which forms the brain and manifests in the hair.

Kidney deficiencies (Yin, Yang and Qi) are one of the most common causes of poor egg and sperm quality, which can lead to infertility in both male and female. In the opinion of TCM, abortion and miscarriage may also cause kidney deficiency; furthermore, leading to infertility.

## **Liver**

The Liver has many important functions beginning with that of storing blood and ensuring the smooth movement of Qi throughout the body. It is responsible for the capacity for recovering energy and contributes to the body's resistance to exterior pathogenic factors. The Liver opens to the eyes and manifests on the nails. Emotions relating to the liver are anger, depression and anxiety, as well as being one of the most important organs in helping the body to detoxify.

TCM believes that the Liver is the major organ related to the female hormonal and reproductive system. It is also believed that many female related conditions and diseases, as well as, infertility are caused by liver malfunction (Liver Qi congestion, etc.)

Emotional frustration is one of the main causes of the liver Qi congestion. Liver Qi stagnation affects the blood flow in the pelvic cavity.

## **Spleen**

The Spleen's main function is to assist the stomach digestion by transporting and transforming food essences, absorbing the nourishment from food and separating the usable from the unusable part of food. The Spleen is the central organ in the production of Qi.

From the food and drink ingested, it extracts food-Qi which is the basis for the formation of Qi and blood. Food-Qi of the Spleen is also the basis for the formation of blood which takes place in the heart.

## **Heart**

The Heart's function is to govern the circulation of the blood, houses the mind in managing emotional, mental and spiritual phenomena of all the other organs, and, determines the strength of constitution of an individual. Infertility couples under high stress will benefit by working on the heart meridian.

Chinese medicine, administered through a proper combination of acupuncture and herbs, strengthens the internal health of a woman and provides a good environment for a pregnancy to occur. Also, the enhanced reproductive system aids in a woman's safe and healthy pregnancy, and allows for rapid postpartum recuperation. Overall, when treated with TCM, men and women can generally expect an increase in energy and a feeling of better health.

In recent years acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine has been recognized for its value in treating infertility in Western medicine. For example: Teams of researchers in Germany have found that adding acupuncture to the treatment regimen of women using assisted reproductive techniques to conceive a child, can dramatically improve woman's chances of getting pregnant. Their

findings, published in the April issue of Fertility and Sterility and widely reported in the popular press, stated that acupuncture increased pregnancy rates in IVF patients.

According to another study recently published in the journal Medical Acupuncture, it stated that acupuncture may stimulate egg follicle development in women undergoing in-vitro fertilization (IVF).

These results were not surprising to us, but expected. We have been using acupuncture and TCM to treat many different fertility problems for over twenty years with excellent results. This topic has always been one of our most important areas of research and study, as it is an area of great personal interest to us. When you listen to the baby's heart beat, then hold the baby (the result) and watch the baby grow, it is the most rewarding experience.

Based on our own clinical experience, we believe that the key factors of a successful fertility treatment depend on an accurate TCM diagnosis. This involves using TCM principles and implementing a proper treatment program. At our clinics, Live Blood Cell testing, Organ Function testing and Vega Allergy testing are also combined with acupuncture and TCM to further diagnose and treat.

With over twenty years practice and research, we have developed a special treatment program for infertility couples called the L-C (Life-Care) Natural Fertility Treatment Program.

This program can be used alone or integrated with Western medical techniques. Either way, we wish to work with the patient's doctor or specialist to achieve the best possible results for the patient. Many of our patients are referred and/or supported by their family physicians and specialists.

When the L-C Natural Fertility Treatment Program is combined with Western medicine it can be used to strengthen and rebalance general health so that Western medical infertility treatments are more effective. It also can minimize the undesired side effects and accumulated toxicity from invasive procedures and drug therapies.

This program working as a general foundation; then according to the patient's specific conditions, the program will be tailored to a personalized treatment program for each individual couple. L-C Natural Fertility Treatment Program includes modalities from all the following categories:

1. Acupuncture
2. TCM Herbal Medicine
3. Acupressure and Massage Therapy
4. Herbal Detoxification
5. Nutritional Food and Supplements (Vega Allergy Testing; Live Cell Microscopy Blood Testing )
6. Energy Balance Exercise (Qi Gong, Tai Chi etc.)
7. Healthy Lifestyle
8. Infertility Education

The **L-C Natural Fertility Treatment Program** will take approximately five months to complete. The program consists of two parts: the L-C Basic Treatment and the L-C Enhanced Treatment.

In this program, acupuncture is the foremost part of the treatment plan; also every acupuncture treatment is combined with cupping therapy.

**The L-C Basic Treatment:** consists of three cycles of acupuncture

treatments. Each cycle of treatment consists of seven acupuncture treatments per cycle. Cycle one – three acupuncture treatments per week for seven treatments. Cycle two – two acupuncture treatments per week for seven treatments. Cycle three – one acupuncture treatment per week for seven treatments. A total of twenty-one acupuncture treatments are required to be completed in three months.

In addition to acupuncture, TCM herbal medicine, herbal detoxification, nutritional food and supplements (Vega Allergy, Live Cell Microscopy Blood Testing) and L-C Natural Health Qi Gong are recommended for all patients.

The L-C Basic Treatment is important for all groups of patients working as the basic foundation to balance the human body.

**The L-C Enhanced Treatment:** after the first three cycles of treatment have been completed, acupuncture is recommended once a week during the fourth and fifth month. Continuing herbal remedies, nutritional food and supplements and the practice of Qi-Gong is also an important health benefit for all patients.

Based on the clinical experience of the L-C Natural Fertility Treatment Program, it was observed that conception usually occurs during the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> month of well attended treatments. If conception had not occurred at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> month, the treatment plan will be reassessed by the onset of the 6<sup>th</sup> month. At this point some patients may make the decision to take a one or two month break and then begin the treatment program again.

Patients are encouraged to continue acupuncture treatments after conception. During the first trimester of pregnancy it is especially important to continue the treatment program in order to greatly reduce the risk of miscarriage, premature uterine contractions, breech baby, nausea, stress and postpartum depression.

For male and female patients it takes a minimum of three cycles of acupuncture (21 treatments) to do the foundational work of regulation. There are specific hormonal adjustments that can be made for both male and female patients in a timely manner. That being said, missing a week of treatment may result in the loss of an important opportunity to bring the body into natural balance

Couples are encouraged to recognize that the treatment program is a team effort and that participation in the program by both male and female is equally important. Patients or couples are divided into four major groups tailoring a treatment program to meet the needs of each individual group.

### *1. Acupuncture*

The aim of the L-C Natural Fertility Treatment Program is to bring the harmony and balance back into the body by regulating the major internal organs in dealing with the problems associated with male and female infertility.

Acupuncture can stimulate the flow of Qi, promote blood circulation, enhance immunity and relax the mind and body. During the treatment program focus is placed on balancing the yin and yang by boosting health energy and blood flow in providing better nourishment to women's reproductive organs.

Acupuncture can also stimulate the nervous system to release chemicals in the muscles, spinal cord and brain in promoting the body to heal itself. In general functions of the entire body are enhanced.

For infertility related issues, the L-C Natural Fertility Treatment



Program uses ACUPUNCTURE and TCM to:

Regulate the menstrual cycle, improve egg quality, promote fertility, reduce FSH (Follicle-Stimulating Hormone), enhance the quality of the uterine lining, improve the flow of healthy blood into the uterus, reduce uterine contractions after IVF , reduce chances of miscarriage, open blocked fallopian tubes, improve quality of sperm, etc.

In the hands of well trained practitioner acupuncture is a safe, cost effective and a highly productive method of treating infertility. However, it is of utmost importance that after conception has occurred, certain acu-points should either be excluded or changed to ensure a continued safe pregnancy, because the stimulation of certain acupuncture points can actually cause a miscarriage.

The major acupuncture points selected are as following:

Hegu (LI4) ,Quchi (LI11), Zusanli (ST36), Saiyinjiao (SP6), Yinlingquan (SP9), Xuehai (SP10), Shenmen (HT7), Xinshu (BL15), Shenshu (BL23), Pishu (BL20), Ganshu (BL18), Qihai (BL24), Mingman (DU4), Baihui (DU20), Zhongji (REN3),Guang Yuan (REN4), Qihai (REN6), Yintang (Extra 2), Taixi (KL3) etc.

### ***Auricular Acupuncture:***

In addition to body points the following auricular acupoints may be added according to need:

shen men, uterus (zhi gong), endocrine (nei fen mi) and ovary (luan chao), liver (gan), kidney (shen), spleen (pi), heart (xin), brain (naoding)

## ***2. TCM Herbal Medicine***

There are more than 150 different Chinese herbs—used in complex formulas comprised of 8 or more ingredients— in the treatment of infertility. They are formulated with the purpose of correcting a functional or organic problem. Clinical studies conducted in China indicate that about 70% of all cases of infertility treated by Chinese herbs resulted in pregnancy or restored fertility. It is estimated that pregnancy can be achieved within six to twelve months with the use of Chinese herbs.

In the L-C Natural Fertility Treatment Program a unique blend of many of these herbal components are prescribed for both male and female infertility problems.

These prescriptions are tailored to the individual needs of each patient. This includes both pre and post pregnancy stages.

## ***3. Acupressure and Massage therapy***

Acupressure therapy aids in relaxation and detoxification and it balances internal organ function through meridian notifications or sedation.

As well, manipulative therapeutic massage is thought to benefit infertility patients through the mind-body connection and relaxation process.

#### ***4. Herbal Detoxification***

Before conception both male and female patients are strongly encouraged to partake in a customized herbal detoxify program to ensure the highest quality of both sperm and egg.

As well, after conception women are strongly encouraged to undergo another cycle of herbal detoxification.

#### ***5. Nutritional Food and Supplements (Vega Allergy Testing and Live Cell Microscopy Blood Testing)***

Personalized Nutritional Analysis (Vega Allergy Testing and Live Cell Microscopic Blood Testing):

Both the Vega Allergy Testing and Live Cell Microscopic Blood Testing methods are recommended to determine the best possible nutritional food and supplement response for each patient's needs. These findings are then put together with TCM diagnostics to determine a proper balanced diet.

Healthy nutritional principles are important in all facets of life. This holds true for infertility treatment as well. Eating the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables; limiting fat, sugar and caffeine; and drinking plenty of water are essential. Excessive thinness can prevent woman from ovulating. Obesity can cause infertility, resistance to fertility drugs and can increase the risk of miscarriage.

## ***6. Energy Balance Exercise (chi gong, tai chi)***

Believers in mind-body medicine (intervention) deem that the mind has the capacity to affect the capability of the human body to function. Several studies have linked anxiety and stress with a reduced pregnancy rate, and treatment with improved rates.

Energy balance exercises such as yoga, tai chi, Qi gong and meditation have been shown to reduce stress and balance the mind-body relationship. In particular, the L-C Natural Fertility Treatment Program recommends Qi gong, because of its ability to balance the 14 meridians in the body and regulate the internal organs.

## ***7. Healthy Lifestyle***

In TCM lifestyle care plays a big part in the overall health and well-being of people in general. Patients should avoid vigorous exercise, hot tubs and saunas, avoid all alcohol, caffeine, cigarettes as well as being around cigarette smoke.

## ***8. Infertility education***

The L-C Natural Fertility Treatment Program strives to educate the patient as to when the best time is to conceive. As well, after conception emphasis is placed on educating patients on how to care for themselves in maintaining a safe pregnancy.

The L-C (Life-Care) Natural Fertility Treatment Program divides patients into four groups.

### **A. Natural Pregnancy**

This course of treatment is for couples or patients who wish to achieve a pregnancy without the aid of drugs, surgery or assisted reproductive technologies ensuring that the mother and baby are in the most natural environment.

Treatment plan: For this group of patients the complete treatment program will take approximately five months to complete. It is important to note that after conception, patients should receive acupuncture treatments once a week for the first three months in order to maintain a healthy pregnancy and a health baby.

### **B. Reoccurring Miscarriages**

This is a course of treatments for women having experienced reoccurring miscarriages. The L-C Natural Fertility Treatment Program has been successful in treating many patients with this condition and many have been able to conceive and carry the pregnancy to full term.

Treatment plan: The treatment plan for this group will take approximately five months to complete. It is very important for this group to have long term consistent treatments; because of the need to rebalance the patient's complete system to prepare for whole term pregnancy.

When treating recurrent miscarriage patients, it is recommended that the patient try to avoid getting pregnant during the first three months, in order to prepare the womb for maintaining the pregnancy. After conception has occurred it is important to repeat the L-C Basic Program which consists of three cycles of acupuncture treatments during the first three months. A total of twenty-one acupuncture treatments are required to be completed in three months in order to maintain a healthy pregnancy and to avoid a miscarriage.

### **C. Combined with Hormone Drug Treatment**

This treatment is used for patients that may choose to combine acupuncture with hormone drug therapy. The use of acupuncture along with the hormone drug therapy can help with the chances of conception and the production of a viable pregnancy. Acupuncture can also help with the many side effects that are experienced with hormone drug therapy, helping the body to detoxify, become more balanced and have a better quality of life.

Treatment plan: It is very important that this group of patients notify the doctor or specialist know of the participation in the L-C Natural Fertility Treatment Program.

After getting pregnant it is important to receive acupuncture treatments once a week, during the first three months, in order to maintain a healthier pregnancy and a healthy baby.

### **D. Combined with Assisted Reproductive technologies**

Many couples who have difficulty conceiving a child by traditional methods often employ various techniques to assist them in the reproductive process. The most common assisted reproduction therapies are in vitro fertilization (IVF) and intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI).

A recent medical research has shown that adding acupuncture to the treatment regimen of women using assisted reproductive techniques to have a child can dramatically improve the women's chance of getting pregnant.

Treatment plan: It is very important for this group of patients to also let the doctor know of the participation in the L-C Natural Fertility Treatment Program.

(a) Before Retrieval: take the whole L-C Natural Fertility Treatment Program. If time does not permit the couple should at least complete the L-C basic program before the egg/sperm retrieval.

It takes a minimum of three cycles of acupuncture (21 treatments) to do the foundational work of regulation.

For this group of female patients, it is very important that the patient receive one or two acupuncture treatments, after retrieval and before embryo transfer so that the uterus can be calmed and nourished, in preparation to receive the embryo.

(b) After Embryo Transfer: On the same day of the IVF procedure we recommend an acupuncture treatment (or at the latest the very next day) and continuing 3 times a week for a total of 7 treatments (first cycle). After this first cycle we recommend treatments once a week for approximately 10 weeks during the first three months.

## ***2. Treatment Program For Men***

The man's physical role in the reproductive process is very important. Men can experience many problems, especially having difficulty with the quality of semen.

**Treatment Plan** for males: completion of the whole L-C Natural Fertility Treatment Program. This program is especially designed for men having a problem with sexual function and sperm quality, fatigue or other physical problems. The L-C Basic Treatment Program is recommended as it takes men about 70 days to generate new sperm.

For male patients, we may also suggest certain lifestyle changes, such as a reduction in smoking and the use of alcohol and recreational drugs, wearing boxer shorts, staying out of hot tubs and saunas etc.

## **Pregnancy Care Ensuring a Healthy Pregnancy**

For all patients who are pregnant and especially those experiencing difficulties such as excessive and prolonged morning sickness, severe back pain, breech position and other problems should consider regular acupuncture treatments combined with acupressure massage for the remainder of the pregnancy to ensure a healthy, easy and enjoyable pregnancy.

**Conclusion:** The L-C Natural Fertility Treatment Program has experienced very good results; 80% of patients treated for infertility problems have been successful in delivering a healthy baby.

Taking into consideration the successful rate and other proven



research results in the world, acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine appears to be an effective therapy for treating infertility either alone or combined with other Western infertility treatment programs.

## **Some Successful Cases in Treating Infertility**

**Case #1** Name: T. Foster

Treatment: Acupuncture/TCM- Recurring Miscarriages

Age:36

Profession: Teacher

Tracey came to our clinic on October 4, 2004 with infertility issues having had 3 miscarriages in the past two years, as well as, suffering from stress and insomnia issues related to the infertility problem. Tracey started a personalized acupuncture and TCM herbal treatment program, after a careful consultation and testing procedure.

At the end of November 2004, after approximately 2 months of acupuncture & TCM treatments she became pregnant. As she did not complete her 3 cycles of the basic treatment program, her HCG level was very low. On Nov 23, 2004 her HCG level was (34); her doctor made her aware at this time of the possibility that she could have another miscarriage. At this point we decided to increase her acupuncture treatments to every other day to ensure she would not miscarry. After receiving intense acupuncture treatments her HCG level increased significantly: Nov 26, 2004 (163), Nov 30/04 (786), Dec 03, 2004 (2487), Dec 16, 2004 (43597). After Dec 16/04 Tracey received treatments once a week for the remainder of the pregnancy.

On July 25, 2005 Tracey gave birth to a healthy baby boy “Luke

William Foster” weighing 6 lb.7oz. After the birth Tracey came back for post pregnancy care.

**Case # 2** Name: H. Boutilier

Treatment: Acupuncture/TCM- Hormone Drug Tretaments

Age: 31

Occupation: N/A

Heather came to the L-C Acupuncture Clinic on February 3, 2006 after consulting with other medical professionals and trying to get pregnant 1 ½ years unsuccessfully. Testing confirmed that her husband’s sperm count was low as well.

Heather began acupuncture, cupping therapy, herbal remedies and a detoxification program to regulate and balance the female organs, to regulate and balance her hormone system and to balance the yin and yang in order to prepare the uterus for conception.

Heather said in her letter to us “On April 3, 2006 my husband and I got the news of our lives, a positive pregnancy. It is so nice to be a success story and be able to offer hope to others going through such a hopeless time in their lives.”

**Case #3** Name: L. Schabloski

Age: 41

Occupation: Mom

Lana came to the L-C Acupuncture Clinic initially on March 25, 2003 having a problem with uterine fibroids and the inability to conceive. Lana had a history of reproductive system difficulties for 10 years, starting with endometriosis, then infertility and a miscarriage the year previous. She was experiencing mild pain/discomfort in the pelvic area, heavy periods, cramping, tenderness in this area.

Comments by Lana: I came to the L-C clinic originally because of fertility problems and the stress related to trying to have a baby. After a couple months of treatments I started to feel great! (Actually, I really good after only a couple of weeks). Four months later I was pregnant with twins! (Careful what you wish for). Two years later I'm back again. Yep, stress and (maybe?) wanting to get pregnant again? Only one this time, Okay?