

Homeopathy promising for infertile couples

Infertility is a problem that affects significant numbers of the population. Many couples consult with practitioners of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) such as homeopaths. Research shows promising results, both for infertile women and men. These results confirm homeopaths' clinical experience.

Infertility – a common problem

Infertility affects a considerable part of the population, ranging from 3 to 33 percent in Western societies¹⁻⁹. Although many seek medical help for infertility¹⁰, an increasing number also consult with homeopaths and other complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) practitioners¹¹⁻¹². One reason given is that CAM practitioners treating couples with infertility have a more holistic approach than conventional practitioners¹³. However, many use homeopathy to treat specific conditions which may cause infertility, such as endometriosis¹².

Improved fertility in women treated homeopathically

A study of 67 women showed 57 percent improvement in fertility¹⁴. Homeopathic treatment seemed to influence several factors important to inducing pregnancy, including regulation of the menstrual cycle, regulation of hormones and enhancing ovulation. The study was a so-called randomized double-blind placebo-controlled trial, where who received homeopathic treatment and who received inert placebo pills was unknown until after the study.

Improved sperm quantity and quality

In a trial of 45 sub-fertile men, numbers and quality of sperm cells improved after individualised homeopathic treatment¹⁵. Couples involved in the project had tried to become pregnant for an average of over four years (range from 2 to 11 years). Researchers found 65 percent increase in the number of sperm cells in men with particularly low cell numbers, and 37 percent increase overall.

Good motility is crucial in order for sperm cells to reach and fertilise an egg. After one year of homeopathic treatment, the percentage of sperm cells with good motility had increased by over 80 percent. The greatest effect was seen in men with both low numbers and poor motility of sperm cells, with an improvement of over 180 percent. Participants also experienced improvement in their general state of health. Reduced consumption of alcohol and avoiding cigarette smoking and other forms of pollution also positively influenced results.

More research needed

Although the mentioned studies involved small numbers of participants, results are promising and confirm the clinical experience of homeopaths working with infertile couples. Some homeopaths report success rates of up to sixty percent¹⁶. More research should be carried out to further determine the effect of homeopathy in infertility.

Conclusion: Homeopathy should be considered as a viable treatment option for individuals and couples with infertility. More research should be carried out to further determine the effectiveness of homeopathy for patients with fertility.

For safe and effective homeopathic treatment, patients should make sure that the practitioner they consult is a registered member of an ECCH or ICH Member Association. For information, please refer to www.homeopathy-ecch.eu and outside Europe www.homeopathy-ich.org

References

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (CDC). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics. Fertility, family planning, and reproductive health of U.S. women: Data from the 2002 national survey of family growth. *Vital and Health Statistics* 2005, 23(25).
2. Chandra, A. and Stephen, E.H. (1998) Impaired fecundity in the United States: 1982-1995. *Fam. Plann. Perspect.*, 30, 34-42.
3. Dick M, Bain C, Purdie D, Siskind V, Molloy D, Green A. Self-reported difficulty in conceiving as a measure of infertility. *Hum Reprod* 2003, 18: 2611-2717.
4. Greenhall, E. and Vessey, M. (1990) The prevalence of subfertility: a review of the current confusion and a report of two new studies. *Fertil. Steril.*, 54, 978-983.
5. Gunnell, D.J. and Ewings, P. (1994) Infertility prevalence, needs assessment and purchasing. *J. Publ. Health Med.*, 16, 29-35.
6. Karmaus, W. and Juul, S. (1999) Infertility and subfecundity in populationbased samples from Denmark, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain. *Eur. J. Publ. Health*, 9, 229-235.
7. Malin, M., Hemmink, E., Raikkonen, O., Sihvo, S. and Perala, M.L. (2001) What do women want? Women's experiences of infertility treatment. *Soc. Sci. Med.*, 53, 123-133.
8. Schmidt, L. and Münster, K. (1995) Infertility, involuntary infecundity, and the seeking of medical advice in industrialized countries 1970-1992: a review of concepts, measurements and results. *Hum. Reprod.*, 10, 1407-1418.
9. Templeton, A., Fraser, C. and Thompson, B. (1990) The epidemiology of infertility in Aberdeen. *Br. Med. J.*, 301, 148-152.
10. Wang Y, Dean J, Badgery-Parker T, Sullivan E. Assisted reproduction technology in Australia and New Zealand 2006. Sydney, National Perinatal Statistics Unit, 2008.
11. Oldereid NB, Rui H, Purvis K. Male partners in infertile couples. Personal attitudes and contact with the Norwegian health service. *Scand J Soc Med.* 1990 Sep;18(3):207-11.
12. Wienhard J, Tinneberg HR. Alternative treatment possibilities of complaints due to endometriosis. *Zentralbl Gynakol.* 2003 Jul-Aug;125(7-8):286-9.
13. Veal L. Complementary therapy and infertility: an Icelandic perspective. *Complement Ther Nurs Midwifery.* 1998 Feb;4(1):3-6.
14. Bergmann J, Luft B, Boehmann S, Runnebaum B, Gerhard I. The efficacy of the complex medication Phyto-Hypophyson L in female, hormone-related sterility. A randomized, placebo-controlled clinical double-blind study. *Forsch Komplementarmed Klass Naturheilkd.* 2000 Aug;7(4):190-9.
15. Gerhar I, Wallis E. Individualized homeopathic therapy for male infertility. *Homeopathy.* 2002 Jul;91(3):133-44.
16. Viksveen P. Et fruktbart kurs med Anette Heggemsnes. *Dynamis* 2005, 2.