

# The relationship between acupuncture and psychological and social messages in the treatment of infertile women



Roya Nikjou<sup>1</sup>, Romina Arabi<sup>2\*</sup>

1. Department of Midwifery, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Ardabil University of Medical Sciences, Ardabil, Iran
2. Department of Midwifery, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Ardabil University of Medical Sciences, Iran

**Introduction:** Infertility is a very distressing experience for many women and is associated with psychological complications such as anxiety, depression and chronic stress. Infertility is a priority in the national women's health policy in Iran. Many studies have shown a positive correlation between the use of acupuncture during in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment at the time of embryo transfer. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of acupuncture in reducing stress caused by infertility and treating infertility.

**Search strategy:** In this systematic review, online databases (Medline, EMBASE, Scopus, Web of Science, Cochrane Library, CINAHL, CIVILICA, and Google Scholar search engine) were searched with the keywords acupuncture, treatment of infertile women, psychological and social messages without time limit until 2023.

**Results:** Although the understanding of acupuncture is based on ancient medical theory, studies have shown that certain effects of acupuncture are mediated through endogenous narcotic peptides in the central nervous system, particularly  $\beta$ -endorphin. Since these neuropeptides influence gonadotropin secretion through their effect on GnRH, it is reasonable to hypothesize that acupuncture may influence the menstrual cycle through these neuropeptides. In addition to its central effect, the sympathoinhibitory effects of acupuncture may affect uterine blood flow. Women described the experience and impact of acupuncture as positive, related to a sense of relaxation and relaxation, interaction with the practitioner, and an intervention with very few side effects.

**Conclusion:** Acupuncture may be a useful intervention to help reduce the stress associated with infertility. Acupuncture can play an important role in women's health promotion strategies. Although the definitive role of acupuncture in the treatment of female infertility has not yet been established, its potential effect centrally on the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian axis and peripherally on the uterus requires systemic investigation. Prospective randomized controlled studies are needed to evaluate the effectiveness of acupuncture in the treatment of female fertility.

**Keywords:** acupuncture - psychological and social messages - treatment of infertile women