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Impact of Whole Systems Traditional Chinese Medicine on In Vitro Fertilization Outcomes

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Abstract

Patients undergoing IVF patients may receive either acupuncture or whole-systems traditional Chinese medicine (WS-TCM) as an adjuvant IVF treatment. WS-TCM is a complex intervention that can include acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine, dietary, lifestyle recommendations, or both. In this retrospective cohort study, 1231 IVF patient records were reviewed to assess the effect of adjuvant WS-TCM on IVF outcomes compared among three groups: IVF with no additional treatment; IVF and elective acupuncture on day of embryo transfer; or IVF and elective WS-TCM. The primary outcome was live birth. Of 1069 non-donor cycles, WS-TCM was associated with greater odds of live birth compared with IVF alone (adjusted odds ratio [AOR] 2.09; 95% confidence interval [CI] 1.36 to 3.21), or embryo transfer with acupuncture only (AOR 1.62; 95% CI 1.04 to 2.52). Of 162 donor cycles, WS-TCM was associated with increased live births compared with all groups (odds Ratio [OR] 3.72; 95% CI 1.05 to 13.24, unadjusted) or embryo transfer with acupuncture only (OR 4.09; 95% CI: 1.02 to 16.38, unadjusted). Overall, IVF with adjuvant WS-TCM was associated with greater odds of live birth in donor and non-donor cycles. These results should be taken cautiously as more rigorous research is needed.

Keywords

acupuncture; Chinese herbal medicine; traditional Chinese medicine; whole systems; in vitro fertilization; live births; embryo transfer

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