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Acupuncture May Improve Sperm Quality

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Aug. 3, 2005 -- Acupuncture may help some men overcome infertility problems by improving the quality of their sperm, according to a new study.

Researchers found five weeks of acupuncture treatment reduced the number of structural abnormalities in sperm and increased the overall number of normal sperm in a group of men with infertility problems.

They say the results suggest that acupuncture may complement traditional infertility treatments and help men reach their full reproductive potential.

Acupuncture May Ease Male Infertility

An estimated 10% of men are infertile, and the male partner is a factor in up to 50% of infertile couples, write the researchers. In many cases, the cause of male infertility is unknown.

Previous studies of acupuncture and male infertility have suggested that acupuncture can improve sperm production and motility (a measure of sperm movement).

In this study, researchers looked at the effects of acupuncture on the structural health of sperm in men with infertility of unknown cause. The findings appear in the July issue of *Fertility and Sterility*.

Twenty-eight infertile men received acupuncture treatments twice a week for five weeks, and 12 received no treatment and served as a comparison group.

Researchers analyzed sperm samples at the beginning and end of the study and found significant improvements in sperm quality in the acupuncture group compared with the other group.

Acupuncture treatment was associated with fewer structural defects in the sperm and an increase in the number of normal sperm in ejaculate.

But other sperm abnormalities, such as immature sperm or sperm death, were unaffected by acupuncture.

The researchers write that acupuncture treatment is a simple, noninvasive method that can improve sperm quality.

SOURCE: Pei, J. *Fertility and Sterility*, July 2005; vol 84: pp 141-147.

