



**This article can be found at:**

**<http://www.news.cornell.edu/releases/April03/fertility.html>**

**Contact: Kathleen Robinson**

**[krobinso@med.cornell.edu](mailto:krobinso@med.cornell.edu)**

**212-821-0560**

**Tracy Hickenbottom**

**[trh9001@nyp.org](mailto:trh9001@nyp.org)**

Acupuncture has numerous potential fertility-boosting benefits according to New York Weill Cornell physician-scientists New York, ny (april 29, 2003)--physician-scientists at the center for reproductive medicine and infertility (crmi) at New York Weill Cornell medical center call for a definitive study of acupuncture as a fertility treatment, citing its numerous, promising benefits associated with increasing fertility in women. An article in a recent issue of Fertility and Sterility--co-authored by Dr. Zev Rosenwaks, Dr. Pak H. Chung, and Dr. Raymond Chang of Weill Cornell-- provides a summary of current research that supports acupuncture's potential benefits for fertility treatment, including the stimulation of increased uterine blood flow and fertility hormones.

"Acupuncture, which is nontoxic and relatively affordable, holds much promise as a complementary or alternative fertility treatment," said Dr. Raymond Chang of New York Weill Cornell Medical Center. "Yet, while there are a great number of biological explanations for acupuncture's benefits to fertility, as well as significant anecdotal evidence, there has yet to be a definitive clinical study," added Dr. Rosenwaks, Director of CRMI.

"One of the biggest obstacles to any study of acupuncture is a single standard of care," said Dr. Pak H. Chung of New York Weill Cornell Medical Center. "Only appropriate training and certification of acupuncture practitioners by state agencies can facilitate the integration of acupuncture into the treatment of female infertility, and health care in general."

The lead review article reports that acupuncture treatment has the following potential fertility-boosting benefits:

- # Increased blood flow to the uterus and therefore uterine wall thickness, an important marker for fertility
- # Increased endorphin production, which, in turn, has been shown to effect the release of a gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH), a decapeptide involved in regulating reproduction
- # Lower stress hormones responsible for infertility
- # Impact on plasma levels of the fertility hormones: follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH), luteinizing hormone (LH), estradiol (E2), and Progesterone (P)
- # Normalization of the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian axis, a key process in fertility
- # A positive effect for women with polycystic ovarian syndrome, a hormonal imbalance present in three percent of adolescents and adults.

Acupuncture is the manipulation of thin metallic needles inserted into anatomically defined locations on the body to affect bodily function. These so-called acupoints correspond to areas on the surface of the body that have been shown to have greater electrical conductance due to the presence of a higher density of gap junctions along cell borders. A greater metabolic rate, temperature, and calcium ion concentration are also observed at these points.

Dr. Rosenwaks, Director of the Center for Reproductive Medicine and Infertility, and Dr. Chung treat infertility patients at Weill Cornell Medical Center at New York-Presbyterian Hospital. Dr. Rosenwaks is the Revlon Professor of Reproductive Medicine in Obstetrics and Gynecology, Co-Director of the Institute for Reproductive Medicine, and Attending Obstetrician and Gynecologist at Weill Cornell. Dr. Chung is Assistant Professor of Reproductive Medicine, Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Assistant Attending Obstetrician and Gynecologist at Weill Cornell. Dr. Chang is Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine at Weill Cornell, where he teaches courses on alternative

and complementary medicine. He is also affiliated with Meridian Medical.