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THE EFFECT OF ACUPUNCTURE IN ASSISTED REPRODUCTION TECHNIQUES. D. R. K. Teshima, C. Nunes, S. Chedid-grieco. Medicina Reprodutiva, Clinica Chedidgrieco de Medicina Reprodutiva, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

OBJECTIVE: The aim of this study was to evaluate the effects of acupuncture on embryo transfer by comparing the rates of clinical pregnancy.

DESIGN: Retrospective, interventional and longitudinal study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: Study with a total of 111 cycles of patients who underwent assisted reproduction techniques: in vitro fertilization (IVF) or intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) from June/2005 to January/2007: 52 cycles with acupuncture and 59 cycles without acupuncture. Acupuncture was performed, in specific points of the body including the ear, immediately before and after the embryo transfer procedure and the needles were retained for 30 minutes per session. The embryo transfer was carried out under ultrasound guidance and luteal phase support was given by transvaginal progesterone administration (Utrogestan®) and intramuscular progesterone. Outcome measure was clinical pregnancy rate.

RESULTS: The clinical pregnancy rate per cycle was observed in 27 of 52 (51.9%) patients in the acupuncture group and 21 of 59 (35.6%) patients in the control group (P=0,083). The mean age was 36.1 $\pm$ 6.1 years in the control group and 36.4 $\pm$ 5.4 years in the acupuncture group (P=0.785). The mean number of embryo transferred was 3.3 $\pm$ 1.4 in the control group and 3.6 $\pm$ 1.4 in the acupuncture group (P=0.462). The technique of embryo transfer was 5 cycles of IVF and 54 cycles of ICSI in the control group and 5 cycles IVF and 47 cycles of ICSI in the acupuncture group (P=1.000). Both groups did not show statistics difference in the mean age, number of embryo transferred and the technique procedure.

CONCLUSIONS: Although there was a higher pregnancy rate in the acupuncture group, this difference was not statistically significant, probably because of the small number of patients in both group. Acupuncture seems to be an important coadjuvant in the treatment of infertility with IVF or ICSI, and further research is needed to demonstrate its precisely effect.

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