

Acupuncture Boosts Sperm Quality in Infertile Men

Researchers demonstrate a significant improvement in specific aspects of sperm quality following a period of acupuncture use.

Acupuncture appears to be a simple method for improving the ultrastructure, and therefore quality, of sperm in men with unexplained infertility, research indicates.

"The treatment of idiopathic infertility could benefit from employing acupuncture," states the team, led by Jian Pei from Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine in the People's Republic of China.

Acupuncture for men undergoing assisted reproductive technology (ART) has already been shown to have positive effects on sperm quality, fertilization rates, and pregnancy rates.

To evaluate its effects on sperm structure in detail, the researchers used transmission electron microscopy to study ejaculates from 40 men with unexplained infertility, 28 of whom received acupuncture twice a week for 5 weeks.

After acupuncture, a statistically significant increase in the percentage and number of sperm in the total ejaculate without ultrastructural defects was observed, in comparison with controls, with improvements in the shape of the acrosome and nucleus. No change in specific pathologies, such as apoptosis, necrosis, or immaturity, however, was apparent.

Encouraged by these results, Pei et al recommend: "In conjunction with ART or even for reaching natural fertility potential, acupuncture treatment is a simple, noninvasive method that can improve sperm quality."

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