

Complementary Medicine in Infertility

Authors:

Masoumeh Delaram*, Hamid-Reza Sadeghi Gandomani**, Sahand Shams***

* Department of Midwifery, Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, Shahrekord University of Medical Sciences, Shahrekord, Iran.

** Department of Nursing, Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, Kashan University of Medical Sciences, Kashan, Iran.

*** Department of Veterinary, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Shahrekord University, Shahrekord, Iran.

Introduction: The use of complementary medicine by both infertility patients and physicians has increased markedly over the past 3 decades. Frequently, patients utilize these therapies in addition to, or in lieu of, biomedical therapy. Within recent years, substantial shifts in complementary medicine use have occurred, and studies examining the scientific basis of these therapies are mounting. Subsequently, in contemporary practice, an integrated structure is emerging where biomedical treatment and complementary medicine are blended. The aim of the present review was to provide a comprehensive overview of the evidence-based complementary medicine therapies available for infertility treatment.

Material and Methods : This review was carried out by using of books, journals and different sites of internet and considering the studies which were published in 2011-2014 .

Results: Despite limited data and few interventional studies for infertility, there is evidence to suggest that some of these modalities may be effective adjuncts in fertility treatment. At least 3 clinical trials with consistent results have examined the use of acupuncture, selenium supplementation, weight loss, and psychotherapy. It seems that acupuncture and psychotherapy have at least some effect on the psychological wellbeing of patients undergoing infertility treatment, and some studies show a nonsignificant trend toward increased pregnancy rates; however, additional studies must be completed to confirm these trends. Selenium supplementation may have some role in improving semen parameters, potentially through modulation of thyroid hormone, but evidence is limited and there remain conflicting results. Additionally, for obese patients with polycystic ovary syndrome, lifestyle modifications including low-calorie diets could be considered. There is little evidence for dietary intervention for patients without polycystic ovary syndrome.

Conclusion: Although there is evidence of the effectiveness of some complementary medicine interventions among infertile patients, many of these interventions require further investigation before they can be considered for routine clinical use.

Key words: Complementary, Alternative, Medicine, Infertility