

Case Report – Acupuncture Treatment in Asthenozoospermia

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Abstract

Reduced sperm motility is a condition known as asthenozoospermia and represents a very common finding in men's infertility. In the research is presented a case of 37-year-old man diagnosed with asthenozoospermia. The patient was treated with acupuncture treatment and no additional treatments were made or any other medications were taken. 6 treatments were made, once weekly. With the acupuncture treatment, the sperm motility is improved and increased, the morphology of the sperm is normalized, the number of sperm with changes in the head, neck, tail and with irregular morphology is reduced and the pH value of the sperm is normalized. The treatment also helps in strengthening the immune system, balancing the hormones, regulating the Qi and Blood flow, stimulating the nervous system, removing the stasis and the phlegm from the body. The acupuncture points used in the treatment are: ST26 (WaiLing), DU20 (BaiHui), N12 (ZhongWan), ST25 (TianShu), RN1 (HuiYin), RN4 (GuanYuan), RN6 (QiHai), DU1 (ChangQiang), BL28 (PangGuangShu), BL32 (CiLiao), LI4 (HeGu), PC6 (NeiGuan), ST36 (ZuSanLi), SP9 (YinLingQuan), GB34 (YangLingQuan), KI3 (TaiXi), SP6 (SanYinJiao), LR3 (TaiChong) and KI1 (YongQuan). Acupuncture as part of Traditional Chinese Medicine, used as a treatment for male infertility, is a safe and effective method to increase and improve sperm mobility, quality of the sperm as well as quantity.

Keywords: fertility, asthenozoospermia, acupuncture, traditional Chinese medicine, pregnancy, reproduction

Introduction

Male infertility accounts for between 40-50% of infertility cases and affects around 7% of men. The most usual causes or deficiencies in the semen are: poor sperm motility or asthenozoospermia, low sperm count or oligospermia and abnormal sperm shape or teratozoospermia. Around 90% of infertility issues are caused by low sperm count. However poor sperm motility or asthenozoospermia is an important factor too. [1]

The sperm needs to travel a long distance before it reaches and fertilizes the oocytes. Therefore, the sperm needs to move efficiently and good sperm motility is more than required. Reduced

sperm motility is a condition known as asthenozoospermia and represents a very common finding in men's infertility. [1-4]

There are two types of sperm motility: progressive motility and non-progressive motility. When the sperm moves progressively, it moves in a straight line or in large circles. The non-progressive moving sperm doesn't travel in straight lines or it swims in tight circles. For the sperm to be able to fertilize the oocytes, it needs to have progressive motility. When less than 32% of the sperm can move efficiently it is diagnosed as poor sperm motility or asthenozoospermia. [1]

The causes for asthenozoospermia may be different and in most cases are unidentified. Some factors and causes of poor sperm motility are long-term use of anabolic steroids, cannabis, cocaine, alcohol, smoking cigarettes, being overweight, varicocele or testicle damage (cancer, infection, injury, surgery). Western medicine treatment options for male infertility are: in vitro fertilization (IVF), sperm donation or intrauterine insemination. [1]

Acupuncture (as well as the Chinese herbal treatment) as part of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is used for more than 2000 years as a treatment for male infertility. Acupuncture can effectively improve semen quality, elevate testosterone levels, enhance testicular blood flow, initiate spermatogenesis, increase concentration and motility of the sperm and others. [5-7] The treatment also helps in strengthening the immune system, balancing the hormones, regulating the Qi and Blood flow, stimulating the nervous system, removing the stasis and the phlegm from the body. [8] [9]

Case report

In the research is presented a case of 37-year-old man diagnosed with asthenozoospermia. The patient was treated with acupuncture treatment and no additional treatments were made or any other medications were taken. 6 treatments were done, once weekly. The treatments were done indoors with a duration of 35-40 minutes. The 0.25x25mm dimension fine sterile needles were used in the treatment. The treatments were made in a clinic for Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture in Skopje, Macedonia by an MD, Ph.D., TCM specialist.

The acupuncture points used in the treatment are: ST26 (WaiLing), DU20 (BaiHui), N12 (ZhongWan), ST25 (TianShu), RN1 (HuiYin), RN4 (GuanYuan), RN6 (QiHai), DU1 (ChangQiang), BL28 (PangGuangShu), BL32 (CiLiao), LI4 (HeGu), PC6 (NeiGuan), ST36 (ZuSanLi), SP9 (YinLingQuan), GB34 (YangLingQuan), KI3 (TaiXi), SP6 (SanYinJiao), LR3 (TaiChong) and KI1 (YongQuan).

In table 1 are presented the results before and after the treatment. The positive changes in the sperm results were achieved in a period of 2 months with only 6 acupuncture treatments.

With the acupuncture treatment, the sperm motility is improved and increased, the morphology of the sperm is normalized, the number of sperm with changes in the head, neck, tail and with irregular morphology is reduced and the pH value of the sperm is normalized.

Table 1. Sperm analysis results before and after the treatment

Analysis	Before	After	Ref. Value
Volume	2.0	1.5	> 1.5 ml
Liquefaction	Final	Final	Final
pH	8.0	7.5	7.2-7.8
Viscosity	Normal	Normal	Normal
Microscopic evaluation of native sperm			
Mobile	10%	50%	>32%
Linear	5%	25%	
Nonlinear	5%	25%	
Mobile in place	10%	25%	
Immobile	80%	25%	
Sperm morphology			
Normal	40	50	>14%
Head changes	12	10	
Neck changes	14	16	
Tail changes	14	10	
Combined	20	14	
Erythrocytes	Present	Rare	
Leukocytes	Present	Rare	
Bacteria	Rare	Rare	
Round bodies	Present	Present	
Agglutination	No	No	

According to the theories of the TCM, the most common causes of male infertility are liver Qi stagnation; kidney weakness, blockages in the meridians due to dampness and phlegm, blood stasis, deficiency in the Qi and blood. [10] [11]

In combination with the acupuncture treatment may be also prescribed Chinese herbal medicine to improve sperm quality and quantity. The herbs are usually combined and are used depending on the presented syndrome – stagnancy, blockage, or deficiency. [12]

Conclusion

Acupuncture as part of Traditional Chinese Medicine, used as a treatment for male infertility, is a safe and effective method to increase and improve sperm mobility, quality of the sperm as well as quantity.

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Conflict of interest

The author have declared that no competing interests exist.

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None.

Statement of Informed Consent

Written informed consent was obtained from the patient for their anonymized information to be published in this article.

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