

Male Fertility

25 % of infertility is calculated to be directly due to the male partner and another 15 to 25 % probably also has a male contribution www.fertilityassociates.co.nz.

It is important to note that while a lab test may list the normal motility rate as lower - a population study looking at men's fertility found that those men that succeeded in fathering a child had a motility rate of more than 63%.

New England Journal of Medicine 345(19):1388-1393).

Sperm is evaluated into the following categories;

- aspermia (absence of ejaculate)
- asthenospermia (poor motility and forward movement)
- azoospermia (absence of sperm in semen)
- olioligospermia (lowered sperm density)
- teratospermia (containing bizarre and immature forms)
- antisperm antibodies

Acupuncture treatment

In a study involving 40 men with sperm problems of unknown origin (oligospermia, asthenospermia, or teratozoospermia) acupuncture was used on 28 men twice a week for 5 weeks and compared to the men who received no treatment.

Quantitative analysis by transmission electron microscopy (TEM) was used to evaluate the samples.

Following acupuncture, a statistically significant increase in the percentage and number of sperm in the total ejaculate was observed (in comparison with controls), with improvements in the shape of the acrosome and nucleus.

The median percentage of progressive motility in ejaculate increased from 44.5% to 55% following acupuncture treatment.

No change in specific pathologies, such as apoptosis (cell death), necrosis (dead or motionless spermatozoa) or sperm immaturity, however, was apparent.

The authors concluded that "In conjunction with ART or even for reaching natural fertility potential, acupuncture treatment is a simple, non-invasive method that can improve sperm quality."

Fertility and Sterility. 2005;84:141-147

In a pilot study using acupuncture with men that were producing no sperm. A course of acupuncture treatment resulted in seven of the fifteen men producing enough sperm to receive IVF treatment without requiring a testicular biopsy. In the control group that received no acupuncture treatment there were no men demonstrating an increase in sperm production.

Andrologia 2000 Jan;32(1)31-9

Lifestyle Changes

Diet

There are various dietary changes that are thought to be helpful in promoting healthy sperm - some such as ensuring an adequate intake of fruit and vegetables (5 - 7 servings per day) and reducing alcohol intake are generally recommended. Others such as nutritional supplements or herbal remedies will require a diagnosis from a qualified practitioner, however it is interesting to note the following study involving organic foods.

A Danish study of greenhouse workers found an unexpectedly high sperm count among organic farmers. Their sperm count was more than twice as high in these men as in a control group of blue-collar workers. Suggesting that organically grown foods may enhance fertility. **Lancet 1994;343:1498.**

Maintaining Optimal Sperm Temperature

The optimal temperature of the testes for sperm production is slightly lower than body temperature, which is why the testes hang away from the body in the scrotum.

Men with low sperm counts are frequently advised to minimize lifestyle factors that may overheat the testes, such as wearing tight (e.g. "bikini-style") underwear, frequently using spas and hot baths or using a lap top computer directly on their knees

Environmental Exposure

Environmental exposure to harmful toxins may reduce sperm count or cause abnormal sperm morphology (shape).

This can occur through smoking, inadequate precautions being taken when using work related chemicals/sprays and the use of recreational drugs (such as marijuana and cocaine).