



Giving Women a Shot At Fertility

Reported by Dina Bair on WGN TV new. This article is transcribed from WGN TV Medical Watch evening cover story, July 16 2003, which featured acupuncturist Andrea Friedman Ishikawa and 3 of her patients, Linda Rodriguez, Suzanne Daley and Dina Richter.

An old secret – giving women a shot at fertility when they thought they couldn't get pregnant: How a tiny needle changed the luck of several women who had trouble getting pregnant.

Boosting fertility the Chinese way: It may be considered alternative medicine, but the choice gives women an option to get pregnant when doctors told them they couldn't. Acupuncture is giving infertile couples a shot at fertility.

One, Two three babies! And they're still coming... These babies were born to women who thought they couldn't bare children.

Linda Rodriguez came to Northwestern Memorial Physicians Group Center for Integrative Medicine and received acupuncture from Andrea Friedman Ishikawa, Lic. Ac. In the interview Linda holds her 9-month old son Diego as she recalls the moment she first realized she was pregnant, "I was, like, Oh my gosh!" But in the past, when traditional treatments for boosting fertility didn't work, "There was excitement, euphoria. We're ovulating! Then, take a test a few weeks later – disappointment. And I said, I don't think I can do this."

Others just don't want to. "At that point, I said it's just not for me," says Suzanne Daley with husband Dan, as they cradle their newborn identical twins, Miles and Owen. After being on birth control pills for several years, when Suzanne stopped taking them and attempted to get pregnant, she was unable to get back her menstrual cycles, even on medication. Acupuncture brought one on right away.

These women needed something else to point them in the right direction.

Linda Rodriguez was miserable on Clomid until she had acupuncture with Andrea and began having fun with the fertility process. "You feel healthy, you feel centered. The treatments are wonderful!"

Fertility experts are studying the effects of timed acupuncture before and after invitro, but for half a dozen years at Northwestern, acupuncture therapist Andrea Friedman Ishikawa has been informally treating women.

According to Ishikawa, "The results were published in the 'Journal of Fertility and Sterility'". The study involved 160 women going through invitro fertilization. "43.5% of the women became pregnant that had acupuncture and 26.3% of the women became pregnant that did not have acupuncture. It seems to help the uterus, build up the blood, and tonify the energy system."

Dina Richter had two unsuccessful IVF attempts before trying acupuncture with Andrea. Shown here seven months pregnant, Dina Claims, "I definitely would recommend it. I think it was an important part of the success."

Therapists suspect that overall good health; relaxation and natural triggers help stimulate pregnancy through acupuncture. "It releases endorphins and sends out the body's natural hormones," says Ishikawa.

For the Daleys it worked twice as well as they expected. We had no idea that it was possible!" Says Suzanne. "We didn't have twins in our family and we obviously didn't take fertility drugs. We just didn't consider that to be a possibility until it was on the screen there, two little heartbeats blinking away. It was incredible."