

### **When does life begin?**

‘When does life begin?’ this question has been discussed for centuries. It begins with quite seemingly simple events. This fertility dance of the egg and the sperm is choreographed by a cascade of carefully timed hormones to mature the egg and the sperm. Fertilisation itself is both a mad dash and a dance choreographed by more hormones, physiology and environmental cues.

Many factors come into play in this dance such as age (fewer than 10% of women in their 20’s have issues with fertility, this increases to nearly 30% for women in their 40’s). Environmental factors such as stress & anxiety, poor diet, environmental contaminants (pesticides and burning plastics) are also a factor plus the many medical factors that can affect the ability to conceive naturally.

Despite the huge advances in reproductive medicine there are couples who experience the pain and disappointment of being unable to conceive, even after several courses of IUI, IVF and many other forms of treatment

### **When you restore health to a woman it will do what it is designed to do naturally?**

Couples trying to conceive can get up caught up with reading forums, attending fertility appointments that they often forget that they need to take control of this journey. It is as much a journey that is about them as a couple as it is about their medical histories.

Couples need to listen to their bodies, mind, heart & spirit.

They also need to become very informed about every aspect of the treatment they have chosen as their means of achieving conception and experiencing a healthy pregnancy.

Western medicine approach to disease is very specific to the system that is not functioning whereas the Chinese medicine approach examines & treats all the various systems in the body - the reality that our reproductive system is not made up of isolated hormones and organs can get lost! In Chinese medicine each aspect of the system must work seamlessly together to provide the right conditions for conception

Reproductive medicine and Chinese medicine differ in their treatment of fertility issues. The western medical approach is to flood the reproductive system with a synthetic version of the hormones the body should be producing in small amounts on its own. This aggressive approach is very beneficial if the fallopian tubes are blocked or scarred for example or if the uterus or cervix is compromised whereas the Chinese medicine approach is to gently return the body to balance so it can not only produce but also respond to its own hormones. The success of the Chinese medicine approach is seen in the treatment of hormonal imbalances which contribute to 40% of the documented cases of infertility.

Luckily for couples embarking on ART, combining both the Chinese medicine approach and the western medicine approach is extremely beneficial. Regular acupuncture treatments and adhering to the dietary recommendations can make a big difference not only to the stress levels commonly experienced during ART but it also supports the woman's response to the prescribed hormones and helps to thicken the endometrium. The success of acupuncture before egg transfer made the news after trials in Germany showed that this made 42% difference in conception rates as it increased the blood flow to the uterus and cervix.

Amanda Hughes runs a fertility clinic @ The Fitzwilliam Health Clinic in Dublin 2. Call 01 6618949 or email [info@fitzwilliamhealth.ie](mailto:info@fitzwilliamhealth.ie) for an appointment for further details.



Amanda Hughes  
*Acupuncturist & Chinese Herbalist*  
*Lic. Ac (adv) Beijing, I.C.T.C.M., I.R.C.H.M.*