

The patients are "Sue" and "Bob", ages 34 and 36, respectively, who have been trying to get pregnant for one year. They have no children, and Sue has never been pregnant. They recently completed two cycles of intra-uterine insemination (IUI), but neither cycle was successful. Both partners have had some medical procedures related to their reproductive systems: Sue had uterine fibroids removed, and Bob had a varicolectomy to address enlarged varicose veins in the scrotum. Both procedures were performed about four months prior to beginning acupuncture. In addition, Bob takes a variety of vitamins and supplements, suggested by his doctor to improve his previously poor sperm motility and morphology. Bob's sperm count is normal.

Sue has somewhat frequent nosebleeds (the cause is unknown), and occasional episodes of vertigo. She reports that she bruises very easily. She suffers from anxiety, panic attacks, and insomnia, for which she has taken prescription medication. She has had elevated blood glucose in the past, and is able to manage this with a low-carbohydrate diet. She currently takes Synthroid to address hypothyroidism, which presented with weight gain, lethargy, low energy, and depressed mood. She has a fleshy, round body type, and makes good eye contact while speaking. Her speech is very precise and controlled. Her tongue is slightly scalloped and red with a red tip and a tender-looking body. Her pulse is rapid (100 beats per minute), and deep and slippery.

Bob is generally in good health. In the past, he took a medication for hair loss, which doctors theorized may be related to his poor sperm motility and morphology; he stopped that medication about nine months prior. He has anal fissures and bowel movements are difficult; although he has a bowel movement every day. He reports wheezing after 5-10 minutes of aerobic exercise. He also says that he had a lot of cavities as a child. He has some pain in his mid-back, both knees, and his shoulder. He says his mood is even and upbeat. He is tall and thin, and makes good eye contact while speaking. His tongue has a peeled tip, slightly distended sublingual veins, and a foamy white coat. His pulse is wiry, forceful, and moderate (about 64 beats per minute).

Sue was diagnosed with Spleen qi and Heart blood deficiency, as well as Lung qi deficiency and Kidney yin and yang deficiency. The treatment principle is to tonify the Spleen qi, heart blood, Lung qi, and Kidney yin and yang.

Bob's diagnosis is Kidney yin and yang deficiency, as well as stagnation of qi and blood in the Liver channel and lower jiao. The treatment principle is to tonify Kidney yin and yang, and to move qi and blood in the Liver channel and lower jiao.

Sue and Bob did an IVF cycle, which included the retrieval of 17 eggs, 12 of which fertilized. Sue experienced considerable pain and cramping, both during and after the egg retrieval; acupuncture helped alleviate some of the pain. She came for acupuncture treatments on the day of her transfer, using a protocol wherein the woman has acupuncture treatments about one hour before *and* about one hour after the transfer. Unfortunately, their first IVF cycle was not

successful, and they were unable to freeze any of the eggs. They were forced to take a break before the next IVF attempt due to the IVF clinic's holiday schedule. During that time, Sue came for acupuncture treatments regularly (1-2 times per week), where we continued to boost her Spleen qi, build Heart blood, tonify the Lungs, and tonify the Kidneys. Because she was unable to take her anxiety medication, many of the treatments involved points to address anxiety and insomnia. Bob did not come for acupuncture during this time because his sperm analysis indicated that his sperm motility and morphology were improved, and his sperm count remained normal.

During the second IVF attempt, 13 eggs were retrieved and eight were fertilized. Again, Sue came for acupuncture twice on the day of transfer (immediately before and immediately after the transfer). She experienced a great deal of pain and cramping during the transfer, for which she came to acupuncture and got some relief over the next few days. Two weeks later, Sue and Bob were thrilled to learn that this cycle was successful and Sue was pregnant! She carried the baby to term and had a healthy baby girl.