

Miscarriage Prevention - A New Protocol

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New Protocol Developed by Dr. Mike Berkley to Help Prevent Miscarriage

For the past ten years I never needed the abdomen of a pregnant woman for fear of causing miscarriage. This method of behavior stems in part from fear of over-stimulating blood flow to the embryo or placenta. This thinking, as I have recently discovered, is incorrect. It has taken me ten years of study and research to enable me to fully understand what is happening in the uterus after a successful pregnancy and why abdominal acupuncture for the first three months of pregnancy is not only safe but serves significantly to prevent miscarriage.

At the luteal phase or secretory phase of the menstrual cycle the predominant hormone is progesterone. Progesterone is created from the follicle that has ovulated the mature egg. This follicle is now known as the 'yellow body' or corpus luteum. The corpus luteum, under the influence of luteinizing hormone which emanates from the anterior pituitary in the brain secretes progesterone. This action is done to enable the uterine lining to be amenable to a successful embryo implantation and pregnancy. If pregnancy is not successful, the corpus luteum becomes atretic (dies) and progesterone levels diminish and menstruation starts.

When a woman does successfully become pregnant, the LH which is required to maintain high levels of progesterone (P) no longer comes from the anterior pituitary gland in the brain. It comes in fact, from the developing blastocyst itself. The blastocyst (developing baby), secretes HCG or Human Chorionic Gonadotropin which has a very similar molecular structure to LH. The HCG causes the corpus luteum to continue to secrete P (this is called corpus luteum- rescue), until the placenta is fully formed at which point the placenta itself secretes appropriate amounts of P to help maintain pregnancy.

So, if the developing blastocyst is responsible for secreting HCG to keep itself alive it made sense to me to use very few and well placed needles in the abdomen to gently stimulate blood flow to the blastocyst so that P would continue to be secreted from the corpus luteum.

This, in my opinion is one of the major ways that miscarriage prevention can be achieved with acupuncture. I am the first one to arrive at this idea and have been using it with great success.

After 6 or 7 weeks the placenta is formed and it secretes P. The corpus luteum is no longer necessary. But, one of the major causes of miscarriage is inappropriate blood flow to the placenta. One of the causes of this is due to thrombophilic disorders (The tendency to form blood clots). But clinically what does this mean? Blood carries oxygen, hormones and nutrients to the placenta and excretes dead cells from it.

These dead cells are called 'debris'. By continuing to use abdominal acupuncture, we continue to gently stimulate blood flow to the placenta (reducing the effects of poor hemodynamics which can occur due to thrombophilic disorder or just poor circulation), maintaining its ability to secrete P, estrogen, human placental-lactogen, relaxin and other hormones necessary for the maintenance of a healthy pregnancy.

I am constantly studying Western reproductive medicine and translating my findings into a Chinese medical model which serves to increase a useful knowledge-base to help couples achieve pregnancy. However, achieving pregnancy is only half the battle. The other half is maintaining a healthy pregnancy. The focus of many acupuncturists is to help their patients become pregnant. This too is my first goal, but only my first. My second goal is to maintain a viable pregnancy and this is where my research and studies are now taking me.

I am pleased to say that at this point our successful pregnancy cases are remaining in the 30 to 40 of miscarriages occur within the first trimester.

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About the Author

As the Founder and Executive Director of The Berkley Center for Reproductive Wellness in New York City, Dr. Mike Berkley is the first acupuncturist and herbalist in the United States to work exclusively in the field of Reproductive Pathology and has been treating reproductive disorders for eleven years. He is Licensed and Board Certified in both Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine. He is also licensed as a Doctor of Acupuncture in Rhode Island.