Journal Articles by Debra Betts

Acupressure Analgesia for use in Labour

Journal of Chinese Medicine February 1999

In my clinical practice I find the use of acupressure provides consistently effective levels of pain relief for women during their labour. Women report a reduction in their pain combined with an overall sense of calmness, as well as a high level of satisfaction with their birth experience. I hope that this article will encourage practitioners to both teach and use acupressure as a birthing tool for labour. [Link]

The use of Acupuncture in Pregnancy induced Hypertension

Journal of Chinese Medicine February 2003

Pregnancy-induced hypertension (PIH) is a closely monitored and potentially serious condition, since if it is left untreated there is potential for eclampsia to develop. Although there is little information in the literature on the use of acupuncture to treat PIH, acupuncture can play a major role in its treatment.

This article offers a comprehensive analysis of PIH including the diagnostic and treatment approach of orthodox medicine, Chinese medicine pattern differentiation and treatment by acupuncture, precautions, advice to patients, feedback from midwives who have been successfully treating PIH by acupuncture, and illustrative case histories. [Link]

Harmonising the Penetrating Vessel in the treatment of Morning Sickness

Journal of Chinese Medicine June 2003

Morning sickness is a very common disorder, occurring in up to one half of all pregnancies, and recent research has demonstrated the effectiveness of individualised over simple (Neiguan P-6 only) and sham acupuncture for treating this condition. Despite this, many acupuncturists express a reluctance to treat morning sickness, voicing concerns over the safety of giving acupuncture treatment in early pregnancy, or past experience of disappointing therapeutic results unless treatment was given more frequently than was practical for the typical western clinic. Hopefully this article will address these concerns and encourage practitioners to actively promote treatment for women experiencing nausea and vomiting in pregnancy. [Link]

The use of Acupuncture as a Routine Prebirth Treatment

Journal of Chinese Medicine October 2004

Pre birth acupuncture refers to a series of treatments in the final weeks of pregnancy to prepare women for childbirth. Research ((Kubista E, Kucera H Geburtshilfe Perinatal 1974; 178 224-9) has demonstrated that the mean duration of labour in a group of women giving birth for the first time was reduced from 8 hours 2
minutes in the control group (70 women) to 6 hours 36 minutes in the group of 70 women who had received prebirth acupuncture. In clinical practice acupuncture is an ideal method to help women prepare themselves to have the most efficient labour possible. Feedback suggests that prebirth acupuncture offers a range of positive effects in labour that goes beyond reducing the time spent in labour, with midwives reporting that use of prebirth acupuncture has contributed to a reduced rate of medical intervention in their practice. This article outlines the use of prebirth treatments in clinical practice in the hope that this will encourage practitioners to promote this very practical treatment. [Link]

Post Natal Acupuncture

*Journal of Chinese medicine February 2005*

Traditional Chinese medicine has very firm ideas on the amount of care and rest appropriate to the first month or longer after childbirth that contrast with the modern emphasis on returning to normal activities within a week or two. Recovery after childbirth can be promoted by appropriate tonifying acupuncture treatments and dietary advice. Furthermore specific problems postbirth, for example persistant uterine bleeding, afterpains, night sweats, perineal discomfort, breast feeding problems and postnatal depression can all be helped with acupuncture. [Link]

A Review of Research into the Application of Acupuncture in Pregnancy

*Journal of Chinese medicine February 2006*

While traditional Chinese acupuncture aims to provide treatment specifically tailored to an individual, the aims of modern research are often different and frequently assess acupuncture formulas for a specific western diagnosis. Despite this conflict, western research into acupuncture presents interesting opportunities for practitioners. Research appearing in medical and nursing journals can be used to initiate discussion with western health professionals, to promote acupuncture practice and evaluate personal clinical practice. This is especially true in the field of obstetrics where safety and evidence based practice are primary concerns. [Link]

Acupuncture For Prebirth Treatment: An Observational Study of its use in Midwifery practice

*Medical Acupuncture. Volume Seventeen / Number Three / May 2006*

**Background:** Midwives in Wellington, New Zealand noted women receiving prebirth acupuncture consistently experienced efficient labours, reporting a reduction in the length of labour and medical intervention, specifically epidurals, medical inductions and caesarean sections.

**Objective:** To explore this feedback through a naturalistic observational study of midwives who use acupuncture as part of their routine antenatal care.

**Design, Setting and Patients:** 14 midwives recorded their acupuncture treatments over a 4 month period. 169 women received treatment.

**Main Outcome Measure:** The following information was recorded; gestation of women at onset of labour,
Results: When compared to the local regional rate there was a 35% reduction in the number of inductions, (for primigravidae women this was a 43% reduction) and a 31% reduction in the epidural rate. When compared to local midwifery practice there was 32 % reduction in emergency Caesarean Sections and a 9 % increase in normal vaginal births.

Conclusion: Prebirth acupuncture appeared to provide some promising therapeutic results in assisting women to have a normal vaginal birth. A further randomised controlled study is warranted. [Link]

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Medical Acupuncture www.medicalacupuncture.org

Inducing Labour with Acupuncture -Crucial Considerations


Twenty years ago the treatment principle I would use to induce labour was straightforward – establish contractions. I used strong reducing treatment at acupuncture points indicated for delayed labour, with little underlying diagnostic effort required. The results of this approach were often disappointing; whilst women gave positive feedback, often convinced that the treatment had been successful due to the contractions following treatment, clinical follow up was less encouraging. Their resulting labours were not always efficient and frequently involved medical procedures due to failure to progress, foetal distress or "stuck" babies.

There was thus little advantage for these women in using acupuncture. They may have avoided a medical induction but the resulting labours were not the “natural” births they were planning. My subsequent experience of working with midwives led to a more satisfying approach, one that used acupuncture to correct possible problems, with a focus on promoting an efficient labour rather than merely hastening the onset of contractions. This article discusses this approach, and includes four aspects that I now consider crucial for achieving an optimal outcome – that of natural physiological labour. The latest research on using acupuncture for induction is also discussed, including the implications this has for clinical practice. [Link]