

New Research Sheds Light on Chiropractic and Infertility

(Buffalo Grove, Illinois – June 28, 2009) Recent research reporting on three women who were previously diagnosed as infertile but conceived following the introduction of chiropractic care reveals that chiropractic may play an important role in caring for families with infertility challenges.



The research, co-authored by local chiropractor Dr. Gregg Stern was reported in the *Journal of Pediatric, Maternal & Family Health – Chiropractic*, includes a review of the literature supporting the role of chiropractic in women experiencing infertility.

“Research is revealing that there is a relationship between abnormalities in the spine, the nervous system and the reproductive system” stated Dr. Joel Alcantara, lead author of the paper. “There are over a dozen case studies previously published that show successful conceptions and the delivery of healthy children following the introduction of chiropractic care and the addition of these three add further weight to the evidence.”

A few years ago the issue of chiropractic and infertility made media headlines following a project by Dr. Madeline Behrendt to report on over a dozen cases of infertility that responded to chiropractic intervention. The theory is that misalignments or abnormal mobility involving the spinal vertebrae interfere with the function of the nerves involved in the reproductive system.

“It makes perfect sense when you think about it” stated Dr. Gregg Stern, co-author & primary clinician of the paper. “As chiropractors we know that spinal nerve interference can lead to all sorts of dysfunction and this is certainly true with reproductive function. Of all the various non-musculoskeletal conditions amenable to chiropractic, anecdotes and testimonials abound on the positive effects of chiropractic care in patients with infertility.”

Infertility is defined as the inability to conceive after at least 1 year of unprotected intercourse and data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate that there were 7.3 million infertile women in the U.S. in 2002 with 1.2 million women having had an infertility-related medical appointment. These data also indicate that from 30 years of age and on, rates of infertility increase. There are many reasons for both male and female infertility, including problems with egg production, anatomic, immune and hormonal factors for the female and sperm count for the male.

“Considering the fact that every single function of the body is controlled by the nervous system it should not surprise anyone that removing interference to the nerves that control reproductive function would lead to alleviation of some of the problems related to infertility” remarked Dr. Matthew McCoy, a chiropractor, public health researcher and

editor of the journal that published the study, “What is surprising is that more research funding has not been provided to study these effects in larger populations of women. This money is instead spent on dramatic and expensive interventions for infertility.”

According to McCoy “All of the organs of the body need a constant and uninterrupted nerve supply in order to develop and function properly. Abnormal position or movement of the spinal vertebra can develop and this can lead to nerve interference. It is this interference, called vertebral subluxations, that chiropractors correct.”

The three women reported on in the study were in their early thirties and had been previously diagnosed as infertile.

One of the women had been attempting to conceive for 2 years without success. She had attended the services of a fertility center and received 2 rounds of the fertility drug Clomid but without success. She was at the time of chiropractic consultation considering artificial insemination. The fertility center found no medical problems with the patient or her husband to attribute the couple’s inability to conceive.

Another case described in the paper was of a woman and her husband who had attempted to conceive for 4 years without success despite assisted reproductive technology. She was prescribed infertility drugs that eventually resulted in 2 ectopic pregnancies. Each ectopic pregnancy was followed by laproscopic surgery. The woman also underwent 2 failed in-vitro fertilization procedures.

A third case reported on involved a woman who reported an inability to conceive over the last 7 months and had concerns about her fertility based on a history of irregular menstrual cycles.

When examined by Dr. Stern, all three women showed signs of vertebral subluxations which were identified using spinal x-rays and advanced technology known as thermography and surface electromyography. These tests are used to identify the extent of nerve interference resulting from the subluxations.

After undergoing short periods of chiropractic care, at Stern Chiropractic, all three women conceived and delivered healthy children. The authors of the study call for more research on the role of chiropractic care in reproductive disorders.

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