Blood Support for Fertility, Pregnancy, and Postpartum Using Acupuncture from Ancient Medical Texts' Theory

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ABSTRACT

Conventional medicine suggests that adequate maternal blood is essential for a woman to become pregnant, maintain a healthy pregnancy to term, and recover postpartum. Adequate blood is recognized for successful embryo attachment and to provide fetal nourishment to support the fetus' continued growth and development. It is common for women desiring pregnancy to take folic acid and sometimes iron to support their blood. Energetic medicine, particularly phytotherapy, offers many therapeutic options to treat the blood, particularly in reproductive medicine. Acupuncture, however, is not as commonly considered on its own for building, preserving, and protecting the Blood, although this modality may be more utilized for treating Blood Stasis and pain conditions such as endometriosis. A synthesis of the ancient medical texts written 4000 BC to 1619 AD—as taught by Tran Viet Dzung, MD, and Nguyen Van Nghi, MD, scholars of the ancient medical texts—offers many clinically relevant acupuncture therapies to consider when treating the Blood to support fertility, pregnancy, and postpartum. This article offers advanced acupuncture techniques clinically used to build, preserve, and protect the Blood—derived from a synthesis of basic Energetic concepts mentioned throughout the ancient medical texts—that can be applied in clinics and research in reproductive medicine today. Acupuncture points with reasons for using them are reviewed with examples in application and treatment to support the infertile, pregnant, and postpartum patient. The acupuncture treatment methods offered in this article have been used throughout the world by medical acupuncturists trained by Drs. Viet Dzung and Van Nghi with positive clinical results. Further clinical observation and research is warranted to evaluate the full potential for acupuncture to build and preserve the Blood, an essential component for creating life in preparing for, preserving, and recovering from pregnancy.

Keywords: acupuncture, pregnancy, infertility, postpartum, Blood, ancient medical texts

INTRODUCTION

IT SEEMS COMMONLY PERCEIVED within the acupuncture profession that to tonify Blood effectively, herbs need to be included in the therapeutic approach. Yet, throughout the current author's more than 20 years of practicing acupuncture professionally, herbs have rarely been used for her patients, including for Blood building, and successful outcomes have been achieved. In countless cases, Blood-building results have been observed across a variety of health conditions from

acupuncture treatments alone. In the specialty of reproductive medicine and obstetrics, protecting, preserving, and building Blood is of the utmost clinical importance, as a woman is naturally more Deficient in Blood because she loses it through menses, pregnancy, and breastfeeding, and her healthy fetus relies on an adequate supply of maternal Blood. The intention of this article is to offer Energetic reasoning supporting acupuncture's potential to build and protect Blood when this is clinically indicated, particularly in reproductive medicine and obstetrics.

BACKGROUND

It has been observed repeatedly in studies that a pregnant woman's blood volume changes in a normal pregnancy,¹⁻³ increasing up to 50%² in volume to provide nourishment to her fetus. This increased maternal blood supply decreases during the pregnancy to support fetal growth and development. Studies suggest that a greater decrease in blood volume through pregnancy may be associated with some healthier outcomes, such as a decreased risk for having small-for-gestational-age infants and that a smaller decrease in blood volume during pregnancy is associated with an increased risk of having lower birth weight and small-for-gestational-age infants.³ Other studies have shown that women with lower blood volumes pre-pregnancy are associated with higher risks of low birth rates, preterm births, and small-for-gestational-age infants^{4,5}—all supporting that fetal growth and health relies on enough maternal blood.

Furthermore, pregnancy conditions relating to low blood volume, such as anemia, contribute to increased risk of preterm deliveries and low birth rates,⁶ as there is minimal blood to nourish the fetus. Studies have shown that low platelets in pregnancy might be linked to pregnancy complications⁷; and that common third-trimester pregnancy complications (such as high blood pressure, preeclampsia, and fetal growth restriction) are associated with a lower plasma increase than in normal pregnancies.¹ To shed light on the importance of maximizing Blood in women seeking, sustaining, and recovering from pregnancy, this article reviews how the ancient medical doctors described the Energetics of Blood and how to act on it with acupuncture.

Energetics of Blood in Reproductive Health

In Energetic reproductive medicine, there is an enormous emphasis on the Blood in women's healthcare. Once in her reproductive years, a woman loses Blood every month from having her menses. In pregnancy, she loses Blood due to supporting the developing fetus. During delivery she loses Blood, often more so, if she has a cesarean section. Postpartum she loses fluids from breastfeeding. Therefore, using techniques to build, preserve, and replenish a woman's Blood is an important part of acupuncture treatment for restoring her health and physiology, as well as preventing and treating disease.

Energetically, a woman desiring pregnancy requires an adequate supply of Blood and Energy to support her fetus, whom relies on the maternal Blood for nourishment to grow throughout gestation. Throughout pregnancy, the woman's Blood supply continues to decrease, demonstrating the need for her to have an abundant supply from the start. To promote a healthy pregnancy with a healthy birth and recovery, Energetically building and preserving Blood in the woman seeking pregnancy is an important part of acupuncture treatment. A Deficiency in the maternal Blood supply, could

lead to concern regarding the health of the mother or the fetus, including malnutrition for the fetus and mild-to-severe pregnancy complications.^{1,4,5}

To build Blood Energetically to help an infertile patient become pregnant, to preserve Blood, to support a pregnant woman reach full term with a healthy birth, and to replenish Blood postpartum to support her recovery, it is important to act on the Spleen, Liver, and Kidneys. This is because the Spleen (and Stomach system) governs the Blood, the Liver conserves and stores the Blood, and the Kidneys are involved with making Blood in the bone marrow. The ancient medical texts (Box 1) elaborate on this theory, offering therapeutic actions to help preserve the functioning of the Spleen, Liver, and Kidneys, and to preserve and protect the Blood. These texts go further in alerting doctors to signs that can threaten the Blood, and the functioning of the Spleen, Liver, and Kidneys, offering therapeutic approaches to treat and prevent these Energetic risks. When clinically indicated, this asserted focus on the Blood in the acupuncture treatment can often influence a woman's chances of becoming pregnant, sustaining a healthy pregnancy and delivery, and supporting postpartum recovery.

See Figure 1 for a review of the Spleen, Liver, and Kidneys' role in Blood formation and the three main

BOX 1. ANCIENT TEXTS SOURCED

A partial list of the ancient medical texts sourced in the therapeutic actions presented in this article include, and are not limited to:

1. Hoang Ti. *Internal Medicine (Nei-Jing: Su Wen and Ling Shu)*. China; 2800 BC.
2. Fou Hi. *Book of Changes (I Ching)*. China; 4000 BC
3. Tchang Tchong Tsing. *Evolutionary Diseases of Cold (Shang Han Lun)*. China; 168 AD.
4. Wang Chou Ho. *Pulsology (Mo King)*. China; 265–317 AD.
5. Yang Ki Tchou. *The Treatise of Acupuncture Moxibustion (Da Cheng)*. China; 1573–1619.
6. Bian Que. *Classic of Difficulties (Nan Jing)*. China; 501–600 AD.
7. Nguyen Van Nghi, Tran Viet Dzung, Christine Recours Nguyen, eds. *Huangdi Neijing LingShu Books I–IX with Commentary*:
 - a. *Volume I*. Marseille, France: N.V.N. Publications; 1994; & Sugargrove, NC: Jung Tao Publications; 2005.
 - b. *Volume II*. Marseille, France: N.V.N. Publications; 1995; & Sugargrove, NC: Jung Tao Publications; 2006.
 - c. *Volume III*. Marseille, France: N.V.N. Publications; 1998; & Sugargrove, NC: Jung Tao Publications; 2010.

FIG. 1. Three Energetic threats to the functioning of the Kidneys, Liver, and Spleen that can have detrimental effects on the Blood.

potential enemies that can impede these organs' functioning and affect the health of the Blood.

The Spleen Governs the Blood

The Spleen and Stomach system corresponds with the Earth element in the Law of 5 Movements: Earth correlates with all that is material and has a form, including Blood. With any problem in pregnancy and Blood, there must be a therapeutic action on the Spleen. The Spleen/Stomach system relates to acquired postnatal Energy—initiating the development of *Ying*, the nutritional energy and immaterial aspect of Blood created from food coming from Earth and the oxygen coming from Air (Heaven)—as the ancient texts describe, “man” is nothing but the “son” of Heaven and Earth. Consolidating and preserving the function of the Spleen and Stomach system ensures good formation of *Ying* and everything of form, including the fetus, corporeal fluids, and Blood.

The Liver Stores the Blood

The Yin polarity of the Liver also needs to be consolidated to conserve the Blood when acting on the Blood in treatment. The Yin polarity of the Liver can be harmed either from the common psychologic factors of irritability, frustration, and anger, or from the Kidney Yin (Water in the Law of 5 Movements) not properly nourishing the Liver (Wood in the Law of 5 Movements), due to overwork and

stress harming the Kidney Yin. This inhibition of the Liver Yin can permit a flaring of the Yang polarity of the Liver (Liver Fire), which can impede the Liver from conserving the Blood and additionally inhibit the Yang polarity of the Spleen (and its ability to control the Blood) via the Inhibitory (*Ke*) Cycle. This flaring Liver Fire inhibiting the Spleen's function can often lead to bleeding in pregnancy.

The Kidneys Manufacture Blood

The Kidneys are involved with making Blood in the bone marrow. Tonifying the Kidneys and the bone marrow is warranted in cases of Blood Deficiency, such as postpartum, post cesarean section, and certain cases of infertility and pregnancy. The enemies of the Kidneys are fear, stress, and overwork. Many women who desire pregnancy, or who are pregnant, are also working demanding jobs while caring for their families and home responsibilities. This stress and overwork harms the Will (*Zhi*), the mental aspect of the Kidneys that assists their functioning. If the Will is threatened by stress and overwork, the Kidneys can no longer function well, and this affects their ability to build Blood (via the bone marrow); thus, the woman will have signs, such as fatigue.

Acupuncture Treatment to Build Blood

When building Blood is warranted for supporting the infertile, pregnant, and/or postpartum patient—for example, a

woman with signs of Deficient Energy and Blood, hypo-functioning of the Spleen (Spleen Qi Deficiency), Liver Yin Deficiency with flaring Liver Yang, or Kidney Yin Deficiency—the following treatment options can be considered, based on the patient's unique situation. Not all points may need to be used for every condition and in every treatment.

Ear points. Spleen (on the left ear, slightly superior and posterior to the end of the root of the helix), Liver (on the right ear, slightly superior and posterior to the end of the root of the helix), Stomach (bilateral, at the end of the root of the helix), and Kidney Yin (bilateral, in the cymba-concha, the superior concha, immediately inferior to the inferior root of the antihelix, directly superior to the middle of the root of the helix). All points should be needled perpendicularly 0.1–0.2 *cun* deep with 1" needles without penetrating through the ear, with the intention to support the Mental aspect (the *Yi*, the *Hun*, and the *Zhi*, respectively) of each organ system correlating to the Blood, to support the functioning of these organs. By supporting the Mental aspect of the organ systems, the clinician can take action to prevent the negative psychologic elements of worry/preoccupation, irritability/anger, and fear/stress that can harm the functioning of the Spleen, Liver, and Kidneys organs, respectively. In supporting the organs' function, the clinician helps the patient build Blood, as these three organs correspond to the Blood. This is ideally a part of the treatment wherein treating the Mental, and building and preserving the Blood is indicated.

Spleen, Liver, and Kidney Source points. From each Source point, there is an internal *Sanjiao* branch that carries *Ming Men*, the innate procreative Fire of Kidney Yang, to the organ to help it function. In pregnancy, when the Kidney Energy and Kidney *Jing* is being used to the maximum to support a healthy fetus, this *Ming Men* can become Deficient in the mother. To stimulate these organs' functioning that are necessary to build the Blood, tonify the Source points—SP 3, LR 3, and KI 3—bringing the *Ming Men* via the *Sanjiao* to the organs to support them in governing, conserving, and making Blood. These points can be used all together when building Blood is warranted, or individually to act on a specific organ. Examples of this are SP 3, when the Spleen has hypofunction, or LR 3, the Earth point, to Calm Liver Fire (with GB 34, the Earth point) that could be causing bleeding due to the Liver Fire putting the Spleen in a state of hypofunctioning via the control (*Ke*) cycle. KI 3 can be used to support the Will, Kidney function, and reduction of stress, massaging the point before needling to make the tibial artery visible to avoid bleeding it and help it be less sensitive in the patient.

Shu/Mu technique: When going further to aid the Spleen, Liver, and Kidneys to Build blood is indicated, using the Back *Shu* points and Front *Mu* points could also be considered as follows:

- For the Spleen: LR 13, and heating BL 20, and BL 49 to erythema with moxa
- For the Liver: LR 14, and heating BL 18 and BL 47 with moxa
- For the Kidney: CV4 “Barrier of the Source” in place of GB 25 is an excellent choice as the Source is the Kidneys, so it tonifies both Kidney Yin and Kidney Yang, and heating BL 23 and BL 52 with moxa.

Using the *Shu/Mu*/Source technique to the maximum may be considered in extreme cases of Blood Deficiency or loss, when supporting a woman who wants to become pregnant or a woman postpartum who has lost a significant amount of blood especially if she has had a cesarean section.

Blood points. The ancient texts, including the *Ling Shu*, highlight two very important points that act on Blood: the Sea of Blood, SP 10, and the Influential Point of Blood (the Back *Shu* Point of the Diaphragm), BL 17, for building Blood, which is important in preparing for, supporting, or recovering from pregnancy. SP 10 and BL 17 would be considered, depending on the patient's position. Additionally, SP6—the intersection point of the Spleen, Liver, and Kidney meridians—is a very important point that acts on the Blood, especially in women's health. For infertile women, tonifying SP 6 is very important. For pregnant women who have anemia, low platelets, or bleeding, tonifying SP 6 gently without stimulation is indicated to build and protect the Blood while being very careful to avoid dispersing it. Dispersing the Blood could have the opposite effect, such as would be indicated to stimulate uterine contractions during labor and delivery. Many acupuncturists and physicians might be hesitant to use SP 6 in pregnancy because of this dispersion effect; yet, if a clinician is sure of their technique, SP 6 is a very helpful point for building Blood.

Bone marrow points. LI 16 and GB 39 can be used in all cases for building Blood and Kidney Yin, especially in women's health. As the bones relate to the Kidneys, the Source organs—and the Source is deep—these points are needled deeply and perpendicularly with a standard 1-inch needle (~ 1–1.5 *cun* deep, depending on the anatomy of the patient). LI 16 is on the shoulder area in the proximal depression formed by the meeting of the clavicle and the scapular spine. GB 39, “disappearing bone” point, is located by sliding a finger up the fibula from the lateral malleolus ~ 3 *cun* where the finger dips into a hollow when the bone is perceived to “disappear.” As there is still a bone there preventing deep needling, the point is found going anterior halfway from this guiding point to the tibial crest, and needling deeply into the interosseous space to tonify the Kidneys, the bone marrow, and the Blood.

Energy points. In the Energetic concept of the duality between Energy and Blood, when therapeutically building Blood it is indicated in treatment to consider the Energy

corresponding to Blood, the *Ying* (nutritional) energy. The ancient medical texts teach that the *Ying* energy leads the Blood and the Blood follows this Energy. Once the Blood is tonified, the *Ying* Energy, the energy corresponding to Blood, needs to be supported in the treatment to have a better effect on building the Blood.

The Lungs, *Tai Yin* of Heaven, are considered, collectively, the Master of Energy, as the Lungs receive the Heavenly energy from taking in oxygen and the Cereal (nutritional) Energy coming from the Earth through the Stomach via the Spleen, *Tai Yin* of Earth. The merging of these two energies in the Lungs, coming from Earth and Heaven, Food and Air, form *Ying* (nutritional) Energy. Beginning in the Lungs, this *Ying* (nutritional) energy circulates through the principal acupuncture meridians, starting with the Lung channel, to carry oxygen and nutrition to nourish all the solid and hollow organs and cells in the body. Acting on the Lungs with the Source point, LU 9, also called the Influential point of the Vessels, helps the Lungs to perform their role in the final phase of the formation of *Ying* Energy, thereby augmenting *Ying* energy. This point can be tonified gently in cases of Deficient Energy (and Blood) in infertility, pregnancy, and postpartum. ST 36, the *He* Sea point on the Stomach Yang meridian, corresponds to Earth and acts on the Yang *Ming*, supporting the essential (*Ying*) Energy. This is reflective of how the Stomach, receiving the Cereal Energy from Food (*Gu Qi*), is the originating organ in the formation of *Ying* Energy.

Another technique to build Energy involves acting on the *Sanjiao*, which manages all the corporeal Energy metabolisms. In pregnancy, as it is warranted to limit having too many needles, all these points may not be necessary. However, for infertility and postpartum, when building Energy is essential, points for the *Sanjiao* could be considered as follows: CV 17 (the Upper *Jiao*), CV 12 and ST 25 (the Middle *Jiao*), and CV 5 and CV 7 (the Lower *Jiao*), and heating BL 22. Additionally, acting on the *Chongmai* can be considered in patients needing to build their Energy and strengthen the organ systems involved with the Blood. The *Chongmai* can be used to distribute the innate procreative Fire of Kidney Yang (*Ming Men*) to aid the functioning of the organ systems via the *Chongmai*'s ascending branch and is often indicated in cases of Deficient infertility and postpartum. Opening the *Chongmai* with SP 4 needled deeply, CV 4 needled deeply to the peritoneum, KI 11 and KI 12 needled superficially and perpendicularly to act on the Kidney *Jing* and initiate the ascending branch, CV 12 deeply to the peritoneum and the 4 Flowers superficially and perpendicularly located 1 *cun* diagonal to CV 12 to act on the spleen/stomach system and *Ying*, and opening the Coupling meridian (the *Yinweimai*) with PC 6 can support distributing the innate Kidney *Jing* (*Ming Men*) to the organs to stimulate their functioning.

Calm the Mental points. In all cases of infertility, especially when the woman is undergoing assisted reproductive treatments, and pregnancy, when the therapeutic

goal is preventing complications and protecting the Blood and the fetus, simply Calming the Mental with acupuncture is often enough. When the Blood—corresponding to the Heart, which houses the *Shen* and all the Mental aspects—is disturbed, there can be Mental signs, causing Heat, which threatens the Blood. Blood is Yin and energy is Yang, and with an exaggerated Deficiency of Yin or Blood, there is a risk of Excess Yang, corresponding to Heat and Fire. This Excess pathologic Fire is the enemy of the Blood and, when present, threatens the Blood. In all cases of pregnancy, especially when the Blood is affected, Calming the Mental with acupuncture is essential to prevent Excess Heat caused by stress, from attacking the Blood, and, ultimately, the fetus.

Calming the Mental to prevent and minimize stress, worry, preoccupation, irritability, and anger is important, as all these negative psychologic factors can impede functioning of the Kidneys, Liver, and Spleen, and thus harm the Blood. To prevent this and help promote calm and serenity, simple techniques to Calm the *Shen* can be used, including:

- GV 20, needled perpendicularly at the anterior border of the posterior fontanel
- *YinTang*, from Curious Point #3 between the eyebrows threaded to Curious Point #4 between the eyes
- CV 17, where tender between the nipples, threaded from below to above in the direction of the channel
- HT7, being careful not to bleed the vessel.

An advanced technique called The Two Dragons could be used, threading two needles from BL 4 to BL 7, from which there is an internal branch of the Bladder meridian that brings water from the *Tai* Yang of the Bladder to GV 20. From this point, there is an internal branch of the *Dumai*, the Sea of Yang, that creates an afflux of Water Energy via the internal branch to the vestibular cochlear zone of the brain to calm the *Shen* and prevent neurologic pathologies (such as eclampsia complications in pregnancy).

Following this reasoning of promoting a calm serene mental state to preserve the Blood to facilitate fertility and support pregnancy, it is even better to explain to the patient the importance of leading a calm tranquil life—avoiding stress, overwork, preoccupation, worry, and irritation—to protect her Blood and the health of her fetus.

See Table 1 for a summary of points and techniques to consider when building Blood with acupuncture for pregnancy care.

DISCUSSION

Acupuncture points to consider when building and preserving the Blood to support fertility, pregnancy, and postpartum include:

TABLE 1. ACUPUNCTURE POINTS TO BUILD BLOOD FOR PREGNANCY CARE

<i>Energetic therapeutic intention</i>	<i>Acupuncture points</i>
Calm the <i>Shen</i> to protect the Blood	2 Dragons, GV 20, <i>Yin Tang</i> , CV 17 & HT 7
Tonify the functions of the Spleen, Liver & Kidneys	<i>Source Points</i> : SP 3, LR 3 & KI 3
Preserve the Mental of the Spleen, Liver, & Kidneys to support their functions	<i>Auricular Points</i> : SP (left), LR (right), ST & KI
Tonify Blood	<i>Blood Points</i> : SP 10, SP 6 & BL 17
Tonify the bone marrow	LI 16 & GB 39 (perpendicular, deeply, 1" needle)
Tonify the <i>Ying</i> Energy that correlates to Blood	LU 9 (Source point) & ST 36 (<i>He</i> Sea point)

Note: Not all points may be required for all conditions or treatments, especially in pregnancy, when limiting needles is warranted. In some instances, SP 3 may be sufficient when tonifying the Spleen is a priority; in others, LI 16 and GB 39 will be appropriate when acting on the bone marrow is important; and in still others, Calming the *Shen* to prevent Heat from attacking the Blood may be enough. Needle retention is 20 minutes; 30-gauge needles can be used if tolerated, with a gentle technique. Cases outside of pregnancy—including postpartum, prepregnancy, postsurgery, or chemotherapy—may warrant additional techniques, including *Shu/Mu* points (warming the *Shu* points with moxa), *Chongmai* technique, and acting on the *Sanjiao*.

- Techniques to Calm the Mental, such as 2 Dragons, GV 20, *YinTang*, HT 7, CV 17, and auricular acupuncture
- Points to tonify the functioning of the organs involved with the Blood (the Spleen, Liver, and Kidneys) with the Source points, SP 3, LR 3, and KI 3; and the auricular points, SP/ST, LR, and KI, to support the Mental aspect of the organs (and adding the *Shu/Mu* technique when applicable)
- The Blood points, SP 10 and SP 6 (and BL 17, if the patient is in a prone position)
- The bone marrow points, LI 16 and GB 39, to build Kidney Yin and Blood
- Points to tonify the *Ying* (nutritive) Energy that corresponds with the Blood, LU 9, the Source point, and ST 36, to act on Yang *Ming* (sometimes considering the *Sanjiao*: heating BL 22, and/or needling CV 17, CV 12 and ST 25, and CV 5 and CV 7; and the *Chongmai* ascending branch to activate the organs' functioning via distribution of *Ming Men*: SP 4, CV 4, CV 12, and PC 6 deeply, and KI 11, KI 12, and 4 Flowers superficially).

When building Blood and Energy are an important part of a treatment plan—such as for preparing an Energetically Deficient woman for pregnancy or helping a woman who has had significant blood loss to recover postpartum—most of these points would be indicated. An ideal treatment plan

might be 3 times per week for the first 2–3 weeks, if a patient's Energy could sustain that, and then 2 times per week for at least 3 more weeks, and then weekly for a total of ~15–20 treatments. In this way, the woman's Energy and Blood can be restored to appropriate levels to either sustain a healthy pregnancy or recover from Blood loss during delivery. When this frequency is unattainable, 2 times per week can still be very effective, until the Energy and Blood return sufficiently, then weekly treatments to sustain the results for, again, a total of ideally 15–20 treatments.

In cases of infertility when the Blood and Energy are sufficient to maintain a healthy pregnancy and the treatment goal is to support the chances of fertility, 1–2 treatments just prior to ovulation can be helpful to encourage healthy ovulation, fertilization, and attachment. Many of the points discussed can support this (such as CV 4, CV 5, CV 7, SP 6, and ST 36), as well as Curious points that act specifically on the *Jing* and hormones: locally (*Zi Gong Xue*, the Uterus Curious point, for example) and distally (such as the Ovary and Uterus points in the ear); and not forgetting the primary importance of Calming the Mental to protect the Blood.

In pregnancy, recognizing that the maternal Blood is so important for the health and nourishment of the fetus, the points outlined above have an Energetic action on building and protecting the Blood to preserve pregnancy and prevent complications. Energetically tonifying the function of the Spleen, Liver, and Kidneys so that they can govern, conserve, and make the Blood supports maintaining a woman's adequate supply of Blood to sustain her pregnancy and nourish her fetus. The points to Calm the *Shen* and treat the Mental prevent Heat from attacking the Blood, protecting it from its enemies of stress, worry, anger, and frustration. When Heat is already attacking the Blood, and a patient is showing signs of bleeding, Calming the Liver Fire to protect its ability to conserve the Blood and prevent it from overacting on the Spleen, using the Earth points, LR 3 and GB 34, are indicated to subdue the Fire to preserve the pregnancy.

CONCLUSIONS

The acupuncture techniques mentioned throughout this article support acupuncture's potential to influence preserving and building Blood when this is clinically indicated. This therapeutic approach is applied by acupuncturists and physicians throughout the world, supporting pre-, peri- and postpregnancy, and has yielded reliable results. The full treatment is not recommended in its entirety for all cases of infertility, pregnancy, and postpartum, other than when clinically indicated; yet, the theory and points presented are reminders of therapeutic actions to consider in part or in total for cases warranting building and preserving Blood. This is often the situation in women's health and reproductive medicine, as, in the duality of Energy and Blood, woman

have more Energy than Blood due to blood and fluid losses with menses, pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Outside of women's reproductive health, these techniques can be considered in treatments for patients recovering from blood pathologies or who have experienced significant blood loss from chronic illness, injury, surgery, metrorrhagia, etc. The treatment therapeutics presented are *not* meant to replace or compete with conventional therapies but rather are intended to offer additional treatment possibilities to potentially enhance current options available in conventional medicine. The points and theory presented in this article are recommended for consideration in future research studies.

The synthesis of the ancient medical texts (Box 1), spanning many thousands of years offers an abundant wellspring of relevant and effective therapeutic actions supported by medical Energetic theory. When fused with the knowledge gained from conventional medicine, this ancient Energetic medicine becomes illuminated better with respect to its clinical potential and legitimacy. The fusion of the two medicines seems inevitable, considering the ultimate goal to promote physiology, and treat and prevent disease.

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