

Moxibustion Helps to turn breech babies

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Recently, an expectant mother of foreign nationality visited my clinic.

She was pregnant with twins and wanted to discuss options for turning her fetuses from the breech position. It was a noticeable occasion as she was an expatriate living in Korea, whereas pregnant Korean women rarely ask for Oriental treatment options for breech positions.

It seems that non-Korean parents are better-informed about various treatment options.

The aforementioned patient went through eight sessions of treatments, at which time it was confirmed that both of her babies were turned to the vertex (head-down) position and the treatments ended subsequently.

Expectant mothers are naturally apprehensive of any type of medical treatment for fears of premature delivery or causing congenital abnormalities in their babies.

When it comes to Oriental medicine, no matter what the treatment, be it acupuncture, moxibustion or medication, they are no less cautious.

The fact is, however, Oriental medical textbooks have recorded treatments to promote healthy pregnancy for both mother and baby alike, and have also described in detail what acupuncture points and medicinal ingredients should be avoided when treating a pregnant woman.

Seeking and receiving Oriental treatments from a professional practitioner is therefore one of the safer treatment options for pregnant patients.

Today's column will walk you through some of the available Oriental treatment options available for pregnant women while touching on some of the recent studies conducted.

Acupuncture is a treatment option that is practiced wide across the board when it comes to Oriental medicine.

Researchers analyzed 105 studies conducted in a number of other countries as well as Korea that looked at treating pregnant patients for various illnesses such as pregnancy-related lumbar/pelvic pains, breech position, nausea, vomiting, headaches, depression, indigestion and insomnia. Those studies amounted to a total of 2,460 pregnant patients with over 22,000 administrations of

acupuncture and the results showed that 1.3 percent of treatments had reported adverse events.

The most frequent of such events were temporary side effects such as minor pain and bleeding in the treated area.

In reality, they can occur in acupuncture treatments whether the patients are pregnant or not, and are so minor that they do not cause concern for pregnant patients.

In the reports, there were very few cases of severe complications, but the acupuncture treatment itself turned out to have no direct relevance to such complications.

The analysis proved that acupuncture is a safe treatment option for pregnant patients.

Regarding treatments for breech position of the fetus, there are a number of recent papers that discuss the subject.

Breech position is when the fetus does not turn into a head-down position.

Ordinarily, most babies turn into the normal face presentation position nearing delivery, but a few of them (about four out of 100 births) naturally result in breech presentation at delivery time.

Due to the risks associated with breech delivery, babies in breech position usually are delivered by Cesarean section.

A 2013 study in Spain involving approximately 400 pregnant women with a fetus in breech position reported that when moxibustion is administered, more patients ended up delivering their babies in the normal face presentation.

While 45 percent of breech fetuses of untreated mothers turned to face presentation at delivery, 58 percent of breech fetuses of mothers treated with moxibustion turned to face presentation.

Although the exact mechanisms of how moxibustion affects the process are unknown, it is guessed that the heat from the burning moxa stimulates the heat receptors to increase the secretion of pregnancy hormones, placental estrogen and prostaglandin.

During pregnancy, expectant mothers sometimes suffer through uncomfortable symptoms as they are unsure about appropriate treatment options.

Oriental treatments are possibly one of the safest options available to pregnant women.

If you are concerned about the health of the baby and the mother while looking for medical treatments, you are recommended to visit your local Oriental clinic and seek professional advice.

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