
Foreword

I have great pleasure in writing the foreword for *Chinese Medicine in Fertility Disorders*; my congratulations to these authors on their valuable contribution to this field of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM).

In 2002 acupuncture research published in a Western medical fertility journal attracted attention from both medical professionals and the general public. This interest has continued with further research published in reputable journals raising awareness amongst medical personnel about the benefits of working with acupuncturists, and website information stimulating interest from couples undergoing fertility treatment.

This has raised challenges for practitioners working in this area of TCM. While research has raised the profile of acupuncture, the dilemma for many practitioners has been that of successfully integrating the true potential of TCM within a medical system that would prefer to focus on acupuncture point protocols as a method of treatment.

What this book does so well is to offer practitioners a pathway for integration. It does this in two very different but equally important ways: firstly, integration with the Western medicine treatment our patients seek out, assisting practitioners to understand and bridge this medical approach. Secondly, within TCM itself; exploring the richness of our past, the relevance of this literature to modern clinical practice, and an approach throughout that emphasizes the value of using TCM as a whole system—rather than focusing solely on the use of acupuncture. It is very exciting to see such a comprehensive range of work within one text, with scholars of historical texts and experienced practitioners within the field of fertility medicine working together to offer such a wide spectrum of therapeutic approaches.

A quick glance at the contents page illustrates the scope of practice that this book covers and the experience of the contributing authors, reflecting the diversity and potential of Traditional Chinese Medicine as it is being used in practice today.

Chinese Medicine in Fertility Disorders offers practitioners the information to work confidently within a Western medical environment—with extensive chapters covering the physiology and pathology of fertility and reproduction from both

a Western and traditional Chinese medical perspective. It also explores the issues of fertility within a traditional social and cultural context, as well as discussing the present day ethical dilemmas faced by practitioners working in this challenging area of medicine.

The depth of knowledge, diversity, and rich experience of the authors shines through their chapters. By allowing each author to explore their subject in such depth this text is unique, with individual chapters that not only examine in detail acupuncture and herbal treatments but also *qi gong*, *tui na*, moxibustion, and Chinese dietetics.

It bodes well for the development of TCM as a profession to have chapters on historical texts, *shen*, and sexuality alongside chapters on treatment for menstrual disorders, the issues surrounding couples undergoing the procedures technology has to offer, including guidelines on assisting couples undergoing the latest assisted reproductive medicine procedures. This comprehensive approach continues through to chapters on treating stress and supporting couples in successful and failed fertility treatment.

As a profession it will be up to those practicing TCM to use the publicity generated from acupuncture research treatment protocols to promote the full potential of our medicine. To shift public perception and medical interest from assisting conception to assisting couples to achieve maximum reproductive health. To shift the focus from becoming pregnant to one that also promotes optimal health during a pregnancy. TCM has the additional benefit of helping couples to cope when their desire for children is not achieved. This timely text offers practitioners the knowledge, whatever their background and preferred mode of practice, to meet this challenge.

With this diverse and informative approach *Chinese Medicine in Fertility Disorders* stands out as a leading text in this field, providing value for both students and experienced practitioners. Having read this book, I have no hesitation in recommending it as an essential text for any practitioner working in the area of fertility and reproductive medicine.

Debra Betts
Wellington, New Zealand

Preface

Ding Tian Li Di (頂天立地—to achieve the extraordinary)

Touching heaven with the head while standing on earth

This Chinese figure of speech vividly illustrates the purpose of this book. The modern methods of reproductive medicine have found human—and therefore earthly—ways of solving a problem that had previously been entrusted to heaven: the passage of time, the *dao*, gods, and saints had the power to make the wish for a child come true. At all times and in all places, medicine was left with the task of preparing as fertile a ground as possible for the seed, which then finally fell out of the sky. And now it seems possible to intervene even here, in the area of new life, in the one aspect—with the exception of death—that had previously been impossible to influence.

The extremely creative field of reproductive medicine is developing new methods at breakneck speed, methods whose refinement appears to vouch irrefutably for their safety and justifiable hopes. Nevertheless, modern biomedicine is at risk of defining the reproductive process exclusively in its biological and technical dimension. Therapists and patients believe in these new possibilities and capabilities, cherish enormous hopes, and then experience corresponding bitter disappointment.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) holds within it the traditions of a medical system that has integrated different concepts of health and illness from the past 3000 years. It utilizes methods for cultivating health or life (*yang sheng* 養生), that is, for preserving health, and for treating the human body as a “holistic system” in a variety of ways, in order to restore harmony, not only within the individual but also between the individual and the external environment. Harmony, the unimpeded flow of *qi* through its conduits and its absorption and production in the internal organs (*zang* viscera and *fu* bowels) is hence also the most important prerequisite for creating new life—and thereby new *qi*. Different from Western medicine, Chinese medicine—which as a whole includes much more than just modern TCM—considers functioning relationships within and outside

the individual to be an essential factor for life and health in and of itself. In contrast to Western medicine, though, and due at least partly to its traditional, vastly different way of looking at the body, on the other hand, it falls short in certain aspects of both diagnostics and therapy that are related to the concrete anatomical structures.

Both medical systems have their advantages—and for the benefit of potential future parents and their child, we should and can make use of both of them; at different stages and with different priorities, but in both cases with a common goal: to fulfill the wish for a child. This book is meant to assist the therapist in the evaluation of those priorities and in choosing the best tools from both medical systems for this purpose.

This book is concrete proof of the progress that has been made in the integration of Chinese medicine with biomedicine and of the powerful rewards that all therapists, whether they come from a traditional Chinese or biomedical background, can reap when they open their eyes and are willing to explore options outside their original field of expertise. The fact that this book is a collection of essays by a large variety of practitioners and scholars furthermore indicates the level of sophistication that the topic of fertility treatment has reached, making it too large an area to be covered exhaustively by any single individual.

In each chapter, we invite you to look at this fascinating topic from a different angle, shaped by the specific academic and clinical experiences of each contributor. The selection of topics covered in this book has been conscious and purposive. Chapters range from historical and anthropological research on the cultural dimensions of Chinese medical notions about fertility to cutting-edge biomedical knowledge and clinical research on TCM treatments as applied in Chinese clinics today. Not ignored either are the particular ethical concerns that modern fertility treatment in all its capabilities and shortcomings brings to the table in our modern society. It is our hope that the inclusiveness and breadth with which we have chosen to approach the complex topic of fertility treatment in the first part of the book will indeed allow therapists to “touch heaven,” while the concrete

clinical information and advice presented in the second half will enable them to remain “standing on earth,” all for the benefit of the patient.

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the authors who have here shared their knowledge and often decades of experience in fertility treatment with the professional public. By doing so, we have succeeded in building a bridge between two medical systems—knowing full well that this is the only way to ensure the best patient care possible. In addition, we would like to thank Thieme Publishers, in particular the Editor Angelika Findgott and Editorial Assistant Anne Lamparter, for their unwavering commitment and encouragement in the production of this book. Sabine

Wilms would like to thank her father, Dr. Klaus Wilms, for the inspiration to reach for the sky in the seemingly Herculean task of translating Chinese medical literature, and her daughter Momo for insisting on a healthy balance between work and play, thereby keeping her feet firmly planted in the ground. Andreas Noll is deeply grateful to his parents and his by now grown children and grandchildren for the wonderful experience that made the writing of this book possible in the first place. How important it is for life not only to have roots but also later become a root itself!

*Andreas A. Noll
Sabine Wilms*