Practice of Acupuncture in Obstetrics

Some of you want to improve their Medical English. Some are also interested by finding some English book to read. And maybe some are involved in the practice of Acupuncture in Obstetrics...

This month the Midwife's corner presents a selection of extracts of a book: Acupuncture in Pregnancy and Childbirth by Zita West. You could also order this book on internet to go further into the subject and read it entirely.

Here are a short cut about two chapters: Preparation for labour, but in the full edition you could find also: Planning for a healthy baby, Nutrition in pregnancy, Antenatal care explained, Each trimester of pregnancy, High risk pregnancies, Abnormal positions of the fetus, Labour with the different stages, Postnatal period (the fourth trimester) and Classical Five Element acupuncture and its use in postnatal depression.

Chapter 2
Pregnancy (extract)

"During pregnancy, more than at any other time in her life, a woman is likely to seek out natural remedies, non-invasive treatments and drug-free pain relief — things that will not cause any possible harm to her fetus. Though she may never have done so before, turning to alternative health care can offer a degree of choice and autonomy that orthodox medicine often denies, helping her to regain a feeling of control over her body. Pregnancy is, after all, a natural physiological life event and not an illness. I find that women much prefer to be treated holistically, as a whole and individual person, rather than just a womb and a collection of symptoms.

They appreciate the chance to get in tune with the changes happening within them and to work in harmony with their body's natural rhythms. Treatment with acupuncture is warmly welcomed by many women who may never previously have considered its benefits. And the benefits for the pregnant woman are many and great.

It is important for the acupuncturist to liaise closely with the woman's midwife or GP, particularly if there are any medical problems. Women should be encouraged to tell their midwives and GPs what they are being treated for, as most midwives and doctors are unaware of all the conditions that acupuncture can help with in pregnancy.

Safety in treatment is paramount and acupuncturists must be fully aware of the contra-indicated acupuncture points, use of moxa and needling techniques in pregnancy.” (...).

Chapter 10
Preparation for labour (extract)

"Every labour is a voyage into unknown waters for the mother to be, especially if this is her first experience of giving birth. Support from the professionals around her, from her birthing companion and from you — her acupuncturist — will go a long way to reassure her, support her and allay her fears. (...) This chapter and the next will introduce you to the various aspects of labour that you are likely to encounter.

Topics in this chapter include: how to recognise the onset of labour, admission to hospital, induction, optimum nutrition in the final week before labour.

Recognising the onset of labour: A number of physiological changes in late pregnancy indicate that labour is imminent. Most women will follow a similar pattern but there will be individual variations, as women have different pain perceptions, different responses and different expectations of labour.

The show: The show is often the first sign that labour is imminent or has begun. This show is a plug of mucus, often bloodstained, which has passed from the vagina, where it plugged the canal around the cervix. Its appearance is an indication that there is a degree of cervical activity. (...)"

By Florence Francillon

Midwife, Poissy-St-Germain (78)

Notes

1. Acupuncture in Pregnancy and Childbirth (Second Edition) © 2008 Elsevier Ltd. Author(s): Zita West, SRN SCM LIC AC, Consultant Editor and Lynsey Isaacs, RGN BSc(hons) MBAcC.