

In vitro fertilization less successful with alternative fertility treatments

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Women who are desperately trying to get pregnant might want to avoid complementary and alternative medicine.

The common belief is that it won't hurt to try alternative fertility treatments before reverting to [in vitro fertilization](#) (IVF). But a new study from Denmark finds that the success of IVF treatment is 30% lower among women who have used alternative medicine. The researchers included over 700 IVF users over a 12-month period. Women who had first tried a combination of alternative treatments, such as reflexology, [acupuncture](#), or herbal- and aroma therapy, had significantly lower pregnancy rates after IVF treatment.

Alex Polyakov and Beverley Vollenhoven of the Faculty of 1000 Medicine emphasize the relevance of the study for IVF clinics. "It is important, when discussing IVF treatment with couples, that their use of alternative therapies is also discussed, as this may have a bearing on treatment success."

Whether the effect on IVF success is a direct result of the use of complementary medicine, or whether [women](#) who were already having more trouble conceiving were more likely to revert to alternative fertility treatments could not be determined in the present study. Nevertheless, Polyakov and Vollenhoven recommend being cautious: "Until further evidence is available, it is best to counsel couples against the use of alternative therapies when also having IVF."

More information: The full text of the evaluation of "Use of complementary and alternative medicines associated with a 30% lower ongoing pregnancy/live [birth rate](#) during 12 months of fertility treatment" is available at [f1000medicine.com/article/id/1163278](https://www.f1000medicine.com/article/id/1163278) .

Source: Faculty of 1000: Biology and Medicine

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