

Treating Disorders Related to Pregnancy

HARI: Traditional Japanese Acupuncture

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- **This seminar addresses infertility and various disorders encountered during and after pregnancy with Japanese acupuncture.**
- **Acupuncture treatment can be effective against nausea and vomiting during pregnancy, shortness of breath, toxicity of pregnancy, metrorrhagia, some infectious diseases, and dystocia caused by breech baby. Miscarriage prevention and easing delivery such as pain relief and dilation problems will be covered, as will post-partum pathologies.**

Prepartum and Postpartum

1. Pathology

Many factors are associated with the causes of **infertility** including inflammation of the vagina, cervical canal, or uterus, and tubal obstruction. If a woman who has been trying to but does not get pregnant within three years of getting married, suggest that she be examined by a medical specialist. If the examination reveals no particular disorder then acupuncture treatment is indicated.

Some conditions encountered during pregnancy include **nausea and vomiting of pregnancy, miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, placental abnormalities, toxicity of pregnancy, metrorrhagia, infectious diseases, and breech baby**. Other conditions that women may develop easily when pregnant include appendicitis, pyelonephritis, and anemia. Autoimmune disorders such as Behcet's Syndrome are seen during or following pregnancy. Moreover, childbirth may be complicated by underlying diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and thyroid abnormalities.

Postpartum conditions for which acupuncture treatment is effective include **hypogalactia, puerperal fever, and mastitis**.

The *Classic of Pulses* says that the following channels work to nourish the unborn baby during the respective months¹:

First month: Liver channel	Second month: Gallbladder channel
Third month: Pericardium channel	Fourth month: Triple Warmer channel
Fifth month: Spleen channel	Sixth month: Stomach channel
Seventh month: Lung channel	Eighth month: Large Intestine channel
Ninth month: Kidney channel	Tenth month: Bladder channel

The Small Intestine and Heart channels are associated with breast milk and the menstrual period.

The text then says, accordingly, performing acupuncture treatment on the Liver channel during the first month of pregnancy will result in a miscarriage. The same is true for the other channels and their respective months. However, there is something unconvincing about this explanation of miscarriage. Perhaps this is an injunction against dispersion of these channels. Performing moxibustion on BL-67 when labor is near fixes breech baby and eases labor. This is because the Bladder channel is being dispersed.

¹ Note that pregnancy is traditionally counted on a ten-month schedule.

[1] Liver Deficiency Cold Pattern

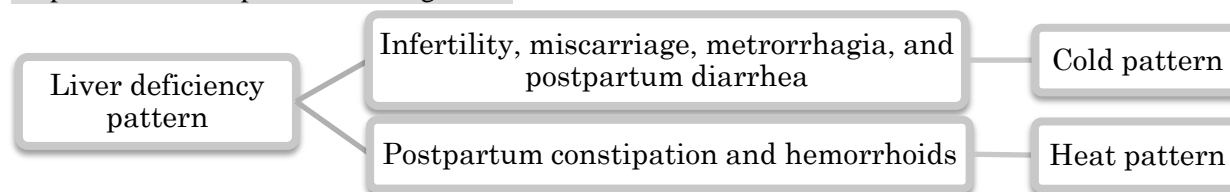
As explained in the *Classic of Pulses*, the Liver and Gallbladder channels nourish the unborn baby during the first two months of pregnancy. Accordingly, it is understandable that it would be difficult for a woman to get pregnant if her Liver and Gallbladder channels are deficient. A Liver deficiency heat pattern is not as much of a problem as a Liver deficiency cold pattern, which most certainly indicates **infertility**. This should be obvious since there is deficient blood and the uterus is cold.

In other words, pregnancy occurs when yang ki of the Kidney and Liver blood are in accord with each other. The condition in which both of these are deficient is a Liver deficiency cold pattern.

In a Liver deficiency cold pattern, not only is it difficult for a woman to get pregnant, but chances of a **miscarriage** or **metrorrhagia** during pregnancy also increase. Conversely, warming uterus by increasing the blood helps prevent miscarriages and encourage **easy labor**. SP-6 is famous for use at such times. However, using it too early could produce dispersion rather than the intended effect, and dispersion increases the chances of a miscarriage.

It is easy for women to develop postpartum blood deficiency. Therefore, postpartum physical ailments (e.g. diarrhea, constipation, hemorrhoids, etc.) often involve a Liver deficiency cold pattern or a Liver deficiency heat pattern. However, mastitis, hypogalactia, and puerperal fever are associated with a Spleen deficiency yang brightness channel heat pattern and a Spleen deficiency Liver excess heat pattern.

Prepartum and Postpartum Pathologies – 1



[2] Spleen Deficiency Heat Pattern

Nausea and vomiting of pregnancy is the first condition a woman develops after becoming pregnant. Some women never develop it. While some cases are mild, others involve frequent vomiting that last all the way until labor. In such circumstances the woman may experience decreased urination and occasionally dehydration. Although rare nowadays, it is possible for a woman to fall into a coma in an extremely severe case.

As indicated in the *Classic of Pulses*, nausea and vomiting of pregnancy occur when the Pericardium and Triple Warmer channels are nourishing the unborn child. When a woman becomes pregnant, internal heat becomes abundant. If that heat ascends to the upper warmer and becomes heat of the Pericardium channel a woman may vomit merely by smelling the aroma of food. In addition, the woman will become even more prone to vomiting if there is stagnation of excess water in the Stomach due to deficient yang ki of the triple warmer. Accordingly, nausea and vomiting of pregnancy is generally associated with a Spleen deficiency Stomach deficiency heat pattern in which there is a lot of phlegm retention. However, in a severe case the patient may have a **Spleen deficiency cold pattern**. In this case there is colder in the Stomach than there is heat in the chest. Miscarriage is possible in women who present with this pattern of imbalance.

Toxicity of pregnancy is a condition characterized by three symptom patterns: hypertension, proteinuria, and edema. The *On the Origin and Symptoms of Various Diseases* says, “Water ki and fullness and edema of pregnancy are caused by deficient and weak Spleen and Stomach.” Not only have the Spleen and Stomach become deficient and weak but heat generated in the Stomach due to the Spleen deficiency has spread to the Kidney and Bladder. This is the same pathology as in kidney disease.

Hypogalactia is a concern in the case of first-time mothers. Most recently, the use of infant formula has become common. However, this is not very good from the perspective of the infant’s health. Moreover, in the section on neurosis, breastfeeding is an emotionally meaningful act.

Acupuncture treatment always improves milk flow. Basically, this is so because acupuncture treatment relieves tension in the shoulders. According to the *Classic of Pulses*, the menstrual period and breast milk are associated with the lesser yin and greater yang channels. The yang brightness channel also passes through the chest. Thus, improving the flow of the Small Intestine and Stomach channels improves the flow of milk.

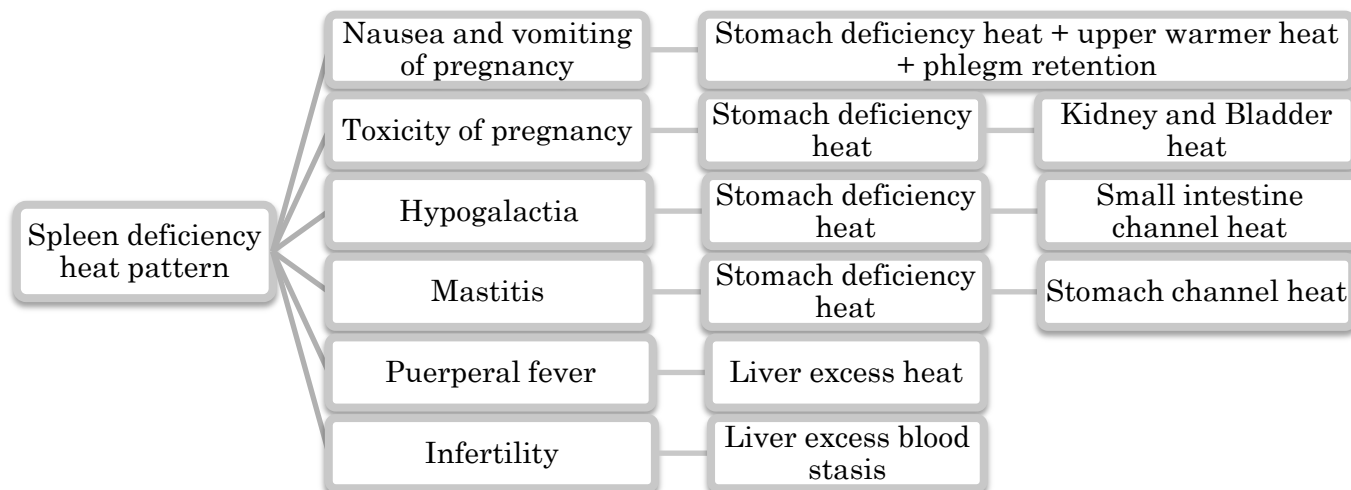
Mastitis may occur if a woman does not secrete enough milk. This condition often develops along with puerperal fever. It presents with breast pain, redness, and swelling, as well as aversion to cold and fever if the woman has an infection. It is safe to say that this involves abnormalities of the Spleen and Stomach channels. In other words, it is often associated with a **Spleen deficiency heat pattern with heat in the Stomach channel**.

Following childbirth it is easy for women to develop infections due to the drop in physical strength. Also called **childbed fever, puerperal fever**, is the common term for such conditions. Generally, this condition should be left to the care of a medical specialist, but acupuncture treatment can often lighten the symptoms. Puerperal fever is often associated with a **Spleen deficiency Liver excess pattern**. As mentioned above, women often develop a Liver deficiency cold pattern or Liver deficiency heat pattern after giving birth due to insufficient blood. However, if she contracts an infection she will develop heat in the Liver channel, the same condition as heat invading the blood chamber.

During pregnancy heat accumulates internally, leaving the exterior unguarded and the woman susceptible to catching the common cold. These cases should also be treated as a Spleen deficiency heat pattern.

A pregnant woman may also develop hemorrhoids, constipation, or low back pain, all of which are associated with the accumulation of heat in the lower warmer and, again, a Spleen deficiency heat pattern.

Prepartum and Postpartum Pathologies – 2



[3] Spleen Deficiency Liver Excess Pattern

It is difficult for women to get pregnant if they have blood stasis. Obviously, when they have blood stasis there is poor blood flow to the uterus, which becomes hard and cold. We said that a woman may become **infertile** due to a Liver deficiency cold pattern. The same is true for Liver excess, in which the mere stagnation of blood causes poor blood flow and chilling.

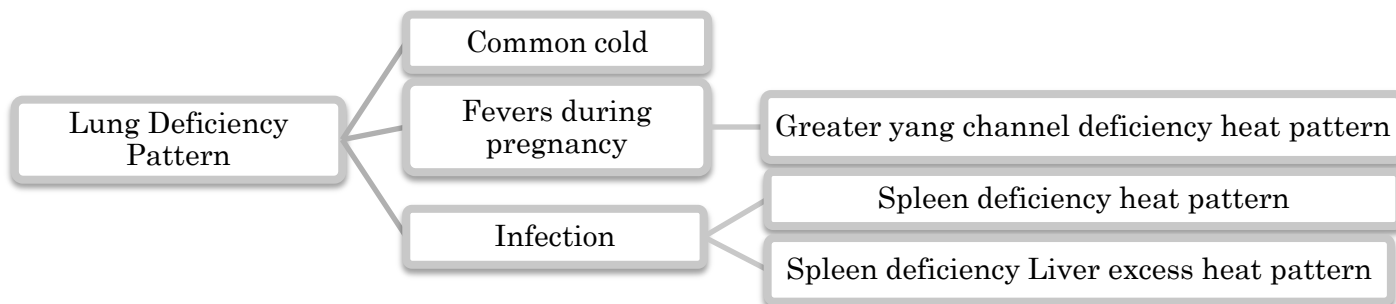
The *On the Origin and Symptoms of Various Diseases* most likely is referring to infertility due to blood stasis when it says, “In a woman without child whose period does not come, wind-cold pathogenic ki has invaded the channel blood and caused the menses to stop. Blood binds in the uterus, preventing yin and yang ki from functioning and transforming. Thus, [the woman] is without child.”

[4] Lung Deficiency Pattern

Women often develop **fevers during pregnancy**. However, many women do not like to take modern medications and come seeking acupuncture treatment as an alternative.

Normally they just have a case of the common cold, presenting with aversion to wind, fever, and sweating. The sweating is due to the pregnancy. By definition, pregnancy means there is a lot of internal heat. When there is a lot of internal heat the pores simply open and let out sweat. That is why the women develop aversion to wind. This is associated with a Lung deficiency greater yang channel deficiency heat pattern.

However, depending on the type of infection it is possible for the condition to develop all the way into a Spleen deficiency heat pattern or a Spleen deficiency Liver excess heat pattern.



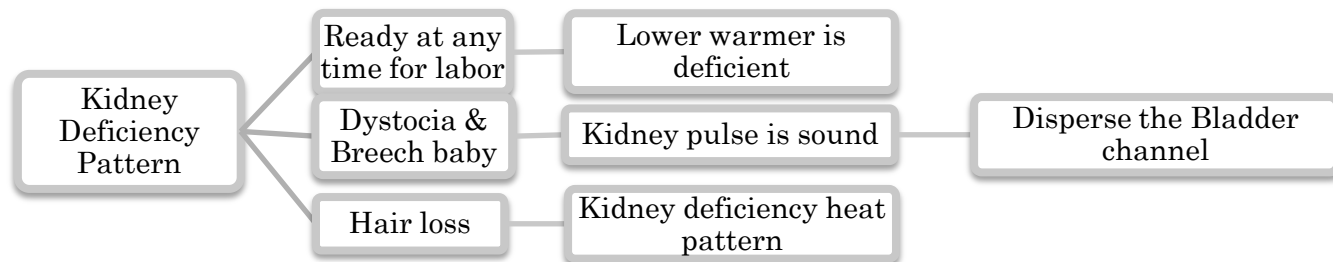
[5] Kidney Deficiency Pattern

Dystocia is common during first births. **Breech baby** also commonly causes dystocia. You should therefore urge late term mothers with a breech baby to get exercise, mainly walking. Nevertheless, people always expect dystocia when there is a breech baby. Thus, it is best to right the baby through treatment, and acupuncture happens to be very effective for this.

As mentioned above, the *Classic of Pulses* indicates that the Bladder channel nourishes the unborn child during the tenth month of pregnancy. At this time the pulse will show Kidney deficiency, indicating that the lower warmer is deficient and that they body is ready at any time for labor. In other words, childbirth takes place when the Kidney is deficient. However, in the case of dystocia the Kidney pulse is sound. You may then want to disperse the Kidney channel, but this will cause problems in the future. Thus, instead of dispersing the Kidney channel you should disperse the Bladder channel.

The woman may experience increased hair loss after giving birth. This happens when heat generated in a Kidney deficiency heat pattern ascends to the upper warmer.

Prepartum and Postpartum Pathologies – 4



2. Examination

[1] Questioning Examination concerning the Chief Complaint and Accessory Symptoms

(Chief Complaint)

- ① Unable to get pregnant ————— Liver deficiency cold pattern or a Spleen deficiency Liver excess pattern
- ② Nausea and vomiting of pregnancy ————— Spleen deficiency heat pattern with heat in the upper warmer and water stagnation
- ③ Edema and high blood pressure ————— Spleen deficiency heat pattern causing Kidney and Bladder heat

- ④ Told she has anemia ————— Spleen deficiency pattern
- ⑤ Told she is passing protein in urine ————— Spleen deficiency heat pattern causing Kidney and Bladder heat
- ⑥ Told she has a breech baby ————— Bladder channel excess
- ⑦ Common cold ————— Lung deficiency greater yang channel deficiency heat pattern
- ⑧ Lack of milk ————— Spleen deficiency heat pattern causing Small Intestine heat
- ⑨ Painful breasts ————— Heat in the Stomach channel
- ⑩ Postpartum fever ————— Spleen deficiency Liver excess heat pattern
- ⑪ Possibility of miscarriage ————— Liver deficiency cold pattern
- ⑫ Increased postpartum hair loss ————— Kidney deficiency heat pattern

(Accessory Symptoms)

- ① When infertility is the chief complaint ask if the woman has ever had a miscarriage. Habitual miscarriages are often associated with a Liver deficiency cold pattern.
- ② Infertility in a woman who tends to be constipated during her menstrual period and who has little menstrual flow is associated with a Spleen deficiency Liver excess pattern.
- ③ When a woman presents with nausea and does not know if she is pregnant, ask about the condition of her menstrual period and carefully judge the situation. Nowadays pregnancy can easily be determined using over-the-counter pregnancy tests; it can also be determined through the pulse.
- ④ If a woman presents with nausea and vomiting ask if she can nevertheless eat or whether she cannot eat at all. If she cannot eat for a long time she may need to be hospitalized.
- ⑤ Edema and high blood pressure indicate toxicity of pregnancy. Ask about her appetite, urination, and general condition. This falls within the field of medical specialists, but in many cases the woman has unsatisfactory results from the gynecologist and so decides to add acupuncture treatment.
- ⑥ If the patient has a case of the common cold determine the pattern of imbalance in part by asking about aversion to cold, aversion to wind, fever, spontaneous sweating, appetite, bowel movements, and edema.
- ⑦ If a woman presents with painful breasts confirm whether she has a fever. Rather than simple mastitis, an infection is possible if she has aversion to cold and fever.

[2] Looking, Listening, and Smelling

- ① By definition pregnancy involves the accumulation of heat in the lower warmer. Thus, a pallid complexion should indicate concern for miscarriage.
- ② During pregnancy it is better for a woman to be chubby rather than emaciated. However, putting on too much weight may result in dystocia.
- ③ Confirm whether the woman has edema of the lower limbs.

[3] Causes, Processes, and Past Illnesses

- ① Infertility is caused by either blood deficiency or blood stasis.
- ② Women should go for walks as labor approaches. Walking promotes an easy birth.
- ③ Following childbirth the woman may experience systemic heat vexation and so want to cool down, but making the room too cool may result in diarrhea and fever.
- ④ Women have a tendency to develop a headache if they use their eyes soon after giving birth, and may in the future develop cataracts.
- ⑤ Hypogalactia and mastitis are caused by stiff shoulders.

[4] Triggers of Aggravation

- ① Women who constitutionally tend to develop a Liver deficiency cold pattern also tend to have miscarriages and so should be careful to not become chilled.
- ② Miscarriages tend to occur when a woman pushes herself too much during the initial stages of a pregnancy.
- ③ Resumption of sexual intercourse following childbirth should wait until three months have past since the birth.

[5] Checking the Local Area

- ① In the case of mastitis, check the location of the swelling and pain.
- ② In the case of hypogalactia, check the area where the shoulders are stiff.

[6] Checking for Contraindications

- ① In particular, serious cases of nausea and vomiting of pregnancy, toxicity of pregnancy, hemorrhage during the initial stages of pregnancy, and puerperal fever should be left in the care of medical specialists.
- ② Acupuncture is indicated for many symptom patterns as long as the patient does not present with the above special conditions.

[7] Judging Contraindications based on the Pulse

- ① Miscarriage is possible if the patient presents with a sinking, thin, and weak pulse during the initial stages of a pregnancy.

3. Determination of the Pattern of Imbalance**Liver Deficiency Cold Pattern****[1] Symptom Patterns**

- ① Tendency to have diarrhea, including during one's menstrual period.
- ② Long menstrual period.
- ③ Tendency to get cold extremities or chilling throughout the body due to being emaciated.
- ④ Difficulty getting pregnant and tendency to have miscarriages when pregnant.
- ⑤ Many patients with this pattern have had miscarriages.

[2] Palpation**(Channel Palpation)**

- ① Pain on pressure will present along the Liver and Gallbladder channels.

(Abdominal Diagnosis)

- ① The lower abdomen will be flaccid and cold.
- ② The ileocecal area will present with pain on pressure.

(Back Diagnosis)

- ① BL-17 will present with pain on pressure.

[3] Pulse Diagnosis

- ① The pulse will be sinking, thin, and choppy. The left middle and proximal positions will be deficient at the deep level. The right middle position will not be deficient even at the deep level.
- ② The pulse will tend to be rapid when the patient is fatigued.

Spleen Deficiency Heat Pattern**[1] Symptom Patterns****(Nausea and Vomiting of Pregnancy)**

- ① Nausea. Vomiting. Increased secretion of saliva.
- ② Change in tastes for food. New sensitivity to smells.
- ③ Nausea and vomiting of pregnancy usually stop by the fifth month of pregnancy but may continue until labor. In this case the woman may become dehydrated and develop low blood pressure, in which case she will need to be hospitalized.

(Toxicity of Pregnancy)

- ① Little urination. Edema of the lower limbs. Tests will reveal high blood pressure and proteinuria.
- ② Although not toxicity of pregnancy, the patient may contract the common cold or develop hemorrhoids, low back pain, constipation, and/or stiff shoulders.

(Hypogalactia)

- ① The patient will present with stiff shoulders, mainly along the Small Intestine and Stomach channels.

(Mastitis)

- ① The patient will present with painful, red, swollen breasts.
- ② The patient will have stiff shoulders and will occasionally have a fever.

(Puerperal Fever)

- ① The patient will present with symptom patterns such as fever, heavy headedness, constipation, diarrhea, and heat vexation of the extremities or entire body.

[2] Palpation**(Channel Palpation)**

- ① Pain on pressure tends to present along the Spleen and Liver channels during pregnancy. The Bladder channel as well will be tight if the patient has nausea and vomiting of pregnancy and edema.
- ② KI-8 will present with pain on pressure in the case of toxicity of pregnancy.

(Abdominal Diagnosis)

- ① Generally, an abdominal diagnosis is not performed during pregnancy.
- ② In a case of mastitis, the breast will feel hot when palpated. Pressing slightly strongly will elicit pain.

(Back Diagnosis)

- ① In both mastitis and hypogalactia the patient will have marked stiff shoulders.

[3] Pulse Diagnosis

- ① When pregnant, a woman's overall pulse will become slippery and somewhat rapid.
- ② A coming miscarriage is indicated by a weak or slow pulse during pregnancy.
- ③ A girl will be born if the entire left pulse or the left proximal position being weak. A boy will be born if the entire right pulse or the right proximal position is weak.
- ④ After childbirth a moderate pulse is good; a wiry, large, and excessive, or, a choppy and rapid pulse are bad.

Spleen Deficiency Liver Excess Pattern**[1] Symptom Patterns****(Infertility)**

- ① Difficulty getting pregnant.
- ② Tendency to have constipation or to have black stool.
- ③ Tendency to have copious urination.
- ④ The patient will have an appetite.
- ⑤ The patient will often get cold feet.

[2] Palpation**(Channel Palpation)**

- ① Pain on pressure will present along the Liver channel.

(Abdominal Diagnosis)

- ① The entire lower abdomen will be hard and the surface will be cold. Pressing will reveal pain on pressure.

(Back Diagnosis)

- ① The area around BL-25 will be hard. The sacral area will present with indurations.

[3] Pulse Diagnosis

- ① The pulse will be sinking, choppy, thin, and difficult to read. The left middle position will be excessive at the deep level.

Lung Deficiency Greater Yang Channel Deficiency Heat Pattern

[1] Symptom Patterns

(Common Cold during Pregnancy)

- ① The patient will sweat and have aversion to wind and a fever.
- ② The patient will have a headache and stiff shoulders.
- ③ If the patient loses her appetite you may assume that the condition advanced to a Spleen deficiency heat pattern.

[2] Palpation

(Channel Palpation)

- ① The Lung channel will be deficient. Pressing it will feel good.

(Abdominal Diagnosis)

- ① The abdominal diagnosis is not used.
- ② In a Spleen deficiency heat pattern CV-12 will present with resistance.

(Back Diagnosis)

- ① The shoulders and back will be tight superficially.

[3] Pulse Diagnosis

- ① The pulse will be floating, moderate, and rapid.

Kidney Deficiency Pattern

[1] Symptom Patterns

(Dystocia, Breech Baby, and Hair Loss)

- ① The patient will have no subjective symptoms related to breech baby.
- ② Giving treatment for a baby that moves a lot will calm it down.
- ③ Walking a lot will help prevent dystocia.
- ④ Women may experience increased hair loss after childbirth.

[2] Palpation

(Channel Palpation)

- ① Pain on pressure will present at SP-6 and BL-67.

(Abdominal Diagnosis)

- ① Generally, an abdominal diagnosis is not performed during pregnancy.
- ② If the patient is losing hair the Stomach channel in the lower abdomen will be cramped.

(Back Diagnosis)

- ① Back patterns are not used in cases of dystocia and breech baby.

[3] Pulse Diagnosis

- ① Labor is near when the proximal pulses start to float.

4. Treatment**[1] Root Treatment Points**

- ① See chapter one for the root treatment points.

[2] Local Treatment Points**(Infertility)**

- ① For a Liver deficiency cold pattern, in addition to the basic points, also use direct moxibustion at SP-6 and direct moxibustion at CV-4, CV-5, or CV-6.
- ② For Spleen deficiency Liver excess, in addition to the basic points, deeply needle points on the lower abdomen and sacral region that present with indurations, the point being to remove the blood stasis. If you use SP-6, use many applications of moxibustion. Also disperse LR-8 and SP-10.

(Nausea and Vomiting of Pregnancy)

- ① Tonify BL-58 in addition to PC-6 and SP-4. An intradermal needle can be used at BL-58.

(Toxicity of Pregnancy)

- ① Tonify PC-7 and SP-3 and use direct moxibustion at KI-8 or SP-6.
- ② Deep needling is contraindicated for low back pain during pregnancy. Touch needling is fine, as is cone moxibustion.
- ③ For hemorrhoids use moxibustion at LU-6. For constipation tonify PC-7, HT-7, and SP-2.

(Hypogalactia)

- ① Use SI-11, BL-43, BL-42, SI-2, and SI-1 after tonifying PC-7 and SP-3.

(Mastitis)

- ① Use touch needling at LR-4, SP-20, and SP-21 after tonifying PC-7, SP-3, and LI-10. Or, use touch needling at areas that are hot.

(Puerperal Fever)

- ① If the fever is associated with a Spleen deficiency Liver excess heat pattern disperse LR-14 after performing the root treatment.
- ② Heavy headedness and constipation as primary symptoms indicates a Spleen deficiency heat pattern. Add dispersion of GB-41 to the root treatment.
- ③ Diarrhea indicates a Liver deficiency cold pattern. Tonify KI-3, LR-3, and SP-1.

(Common Cold)

- ① Tonify LU-9, LU-8, BL-58, and BL-59, and use touch needling on the shoulders and back until the patient stops sweating.

(Dystocia and Breech Baby)

- ① Use direct moxibustion on SP-6 and BL-67. Use about 30 application on SP-6 and 3-10 applications on BL-67.
- ② Moxibustion at SP-6 can start after the forth month and in the last month for BL-67.