

## **Development of the AFN**

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The AFN began with an email from a newly qualified MBAcC asking for advice about reading material related to fertility. Out of this correspondence, in October 2005, a one day workshop was developed with 20 MBAcC from across the country.

It was agreed at this workshop to form the Acupuncture Fertility Network (AFN), and to organise a post graduate teaching seminar for treatment in support of assisted conception (AC).

- the western protocols being used to assist conception are a new kind of science and a new kind of health care
- there is very little precedence in acupuncture teachings for this work
- as acupuncturists we need to teach each other how to best understand what we are experiencing in clinical work in support of AC

There is a very clear understanding from men and women that having acupuncture with AC greatly improves their experience and outcomes. Having AC treatment is a stressful experience; Chinese medicine has a particular capacity to treat this state and the existent and resultant physical affects of this emotionally charged stress. Patients benefit greatly from this support.

It was decided by the AFN that:

- there is such a demand for this work in all parts of the country that the initial seminar should aim for 2-300 nationally
- it is important to find a high calibre of experienced teaching, and that it is imperative to secure the support of senior tutors. (Giovanni Maciocia, Peter Deadman)
- the teaching of assisted protocols should be done by western gynaecologists (RCOG), and to request a fulsome explanation of AC protocol reasoning
- a 3 day structure was agreed with one day for western teaching and two days for acupuncture teaching
- that an emphasis on research should be engendered
- it was agreed that as Jani White was already underway in preparing an obstetric seminar that her company Naturechild Ltd. would also organise a fertility seminar .

The need for an obstetric course had become apparent after Zita West's decision in 2004 not to teach her pregnancy and fertility series any longer. At the time of the first AFN meeting the process for developing the obstetric course was well under way, with the commitment of both Debra Betts and Sarah Budd secured.

Though there is great debate about specialisation in the acupuncture profession, there is still a need regardless to provide high calibre post graduate tuition in the fields of Obstetrics and Fertility.

It was decided that the AFN would be a special interest group that would encourage Continual Professional Development (CPD) in the fields of fertility and gynaecology.