Author's response to reviews

Title: Quality of life, coping strategies and support needs of women seeking Traditional Chinese Medicine for infertility and viable pregnancy in Australia: a mixed methods approach

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Response to editor’s comments:

Dear editors,

Our study was not an intervention study rather it was an observational explorative study. Therefore diversity of the population was critical to acquire insight on behavioural and social pattern of women seeking TCM therapy for fertility. The primary outcome measures of the study were the quality of life, coping strategies and support needs, and the impact of TCM on these three aspects is primarily presented in the article.

Not all participants chose to undergo IVF in addition to TCM, and about a quarter of participants achieved pregnancy and life birth within a year with TCM alone. We ceased follow up of participants after one year. It is possible that remaining participants fell pregnant after one year with or without TCM and/or IVF therapy.

It is important to note, that all participants reported menstrual changes after 1-3 months of TCM therapy, which are indicative to improved fertility and therefore chance of viable pregnancy.

To clarify the purpose of the study, we added the following paragraph at the start of the discussion: “Our study examined women’s experiences of Traditional Chinese Medicine therapy for infertility and viable pregnancy. Women sought TCM on their own accord at any stage of their quest for a child, some in conjunction with IVF. Our observational study explored the motivation and background of women their quality of life, coping strategies and support needs, at the time they sought TCM therapy.”

To further clarify the outcomes pertaining to fertility we amended the relevant paragraph in the results section as follows: “All women reported menstrual changes after 1-3 months of TCM therapy, including the regulation of temperature pattern and cycle length or changes to blood and mucus quality, indicative to improved fertility and chance of viable pregnancy [14]. Within one year after the interviews, 13 (52%) women had given birth to healthy babies, six of those after TCM treatment alone, and seven with IVF after TCM therapy [14]. Follow-up of participants was ceased after one year.”

Yours sincerely,
Dr Karin Ried
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