Reviewer's report

Title: Transcutaneous electrical acupoint stimulation to improve pregnancy rates for women undergoing in vitro fertilization: a study protocol for a randomized controlled trial

Version: 1 Date: 24 March 2014

Reviewer: Lawrence Friedman

Reviewer's report:

I have reviewed this protocol manuscript. I have several comments/questions:

a) The English is awkward in places. The manuscript should be edited by a native English speaker.

b) The word "improve" in the title suggests we already know the outcome of the trial. It might be reworded to something like, "The effect of transcutaneous electrical acupoint stimulation on pregnancy rates in women undergoing in vitro fertilization: a study protocol for a randomized controlled trial."

c) The background should explain why, if electro-acupuncture plus IVF has been shown to be superior to IVF alone, it is ethical to use a control group of IVF alone.

d) There are two references to different Figure 1's (pages 6 and 11). That should be corrected (presumably, page 11 should refer to Figure 2) and the Figure 1 referenced on page 6 was not included. The figure included in the text (presumably a new figure 2) should have a title.

e) In the sample size section, it seems (though it is not explicitly stated) that the study is powered to detect a difference between TEAS plus IVF and the control (IVF alone). Is this correct? If so, since one of the main goals is to compare TEAS plus IVF against EA plus IVF (page 5, bottom says "...whether if brings the same or better effects as compared with real acupuncture."), is there any power for that comparison?

f) In the Statistical Analysis section, how will missing data, withdrawals, etc. be handled in the intention-to-treat analysis?

g) In the Trial Status section, when did (or when will) enrollment begin and when is it expected to be completed?