Title of project: Development of a treatment protocol for pre birth treatment

FOR code 1104

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Location of project: Campbelltown campus

Project Background

Acupuncture pre birth treatment refers to a series of treatments in the final weeks of pregnancy to prepare the women for childbirth. Traditional Chinese medicine has a history of providing advice to prepare the women for labour and birth (1). Several acupuncture trials have focussed on evaluating the role of acupuncture to induce labour within a 2 day period and therefore to reduce the need for induction agents (2). To date these trials have shown no important change on relevant clinical outcomes although there is some evidence of cervical maturation and shorter lengths of labour, highlighting a need to further examine the role of acupuncture for birth preparation from 36-37 weeks of pregnancy.

In NSW one third of nulliparous women greater than 37 weeks gestation with a singleton cephalic presentation had an induction of labour (3). These findings reflect the group of women who require an induction due to post dates, however there us an increasing concern about induction rates among at risk groups of women including with gestational diabetes or those overweight. For this later group IOL is associated with longer duration of labour, interventions and increasing hospital costs. New and acceptable approaches to birth preparation are required. This project will undertake studies to inform future research.

Aim of study

1. To undertake focus groups with pregnant women to explore their views towards pre-birth acupuncture
2. To develop acupuncture treatment protocols for cervical ripening for women.

Methods

The study will involve:

1. Design of a qualitative study involving interviews or focus group discussions with women from 36 weeks on wards to seek their vies on the role of acupuncture as a pre-birth treatment.
2. Development of a Delphi consensus tool seeking acupuncturists perspectives on the design of an acupuncture treatment protocol that could be used in a clinical or research setting.

Ethics Application Requirements

Ethics approval will be sought.
Key references