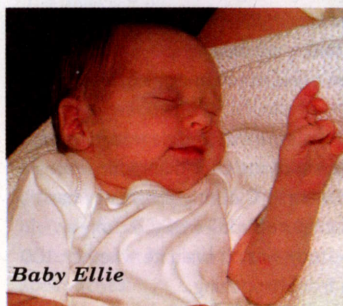


case study

Natural Fertility

by Rumana Zahn BSc (Hons) C Ed Dip M KFRP MN MRNI MGNI MAMH



Baby Ellie



Rumana Zahn BSc (Hons) C Ed
Dip M KFRP MN MRNI MGNI MAMH

Life is precious; the gift of creating life is something precious too, often taken for granted by some. Imagine having this ability, yet it not being able to work for you.

For some couples, the desperate need to have a child is an incredibly strong driving force which can result in an intense emotional roller-coaster. The route most couples take is the one offered by doctors after the necessary investigations have taken place, generally IVF (*in-vitro* fertilization) or the more controversial ICSI (intra-cytoplasmic sperm injection).¹ Yet an increasing number of couples are turning to natural medicine to such an extent that I have developed the SEED natural fertility programme.

Which Route to Take?

From Diagnosis to Treatment

Generally, couples choose the natural route after having undergone diagnosis, or where conventional treatment has not worked. Some may even be on long waiting lists and take this time as an opportunity to look for alternative routes.

Michelle and Andrew, both in their early 30s, enlisted my support after coming to the realization that there may be a chance of not being able to conceive. Having had all the diagnostic tests, the results showed Michelle was having regular monthly cycles but was not ovulating.

She was prescribed Clomiphene Citrate, a hormonal drug to treat her

anovulatory cycle. It works by increasing the output of hormones by the pituitary gland to stimulate ovulation. No nutritional advice was provided by the doctor nor any suitable lifestyle adjustments to consider. After six cycles and no results her next option was to consider IVF. She was reluctant to go down this route, as having done some research herself, she became aware of the links between tak-

ing artificial hormones and cancer. This corresponds to various published studies in the *Lancet* and other medical journals on ovarian cell tumours occurring in women undergoing fertility treatment.²

The Foundations

Of the infertility cases I see within my clinic, generally it is the woman who is in need of treatment rather than her

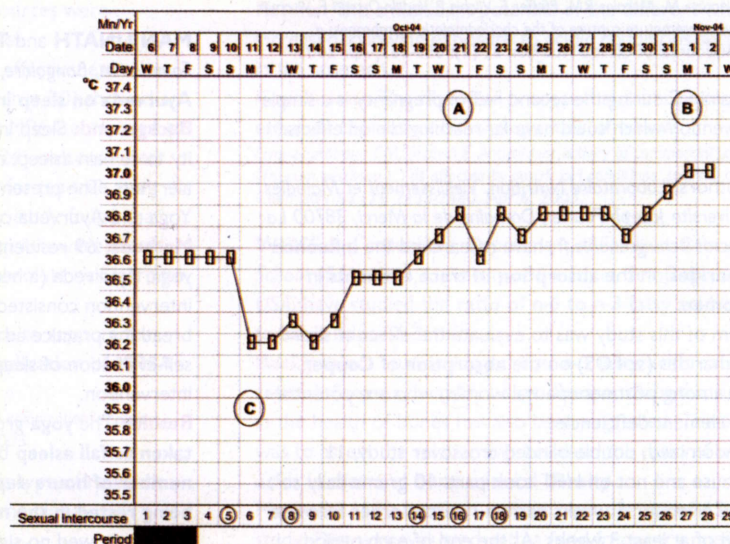


Figure 1. Fertility Chart: Michelle. Age 33. Notes: 11th Oct – Ran out of *Agnus Castus* Restarted on 25th Oct. 14th Oct – Started liver drink for 5 days. A – Temperature rise around mid-cycle indicates ovulation. B – A second temperature rise may indicate pregnancy particularly if sustained over 20 days. This second shift in temperature is due to an increase in progesterone levels, following implantation. C – An unusual temperature drop around the 11th may be related to the hormonal shift without the continued use of the herbal formula.

partner, although this trend is changing. Infertility cases often have a number of similarities. Many women suffer a range of symptoms for many years, including problematic menstruation, PMS, headaches and digestive disorders including blood sugar imbalances and multiple allergies. These symptoms must be addressed to strengthen overall health and I recommend a period of not less than six months to go through the programme in order to gently allow the body to re-adjust itself.

The SEED programme focuses on providing an integrated course of treatment calling together a multitude of different naturopathic disciplines. In Michelle's case, a thorough assessment was made using a combination of Iridology, Kinesiology and Bio-Energy. This provided an overall picture of Michelle's constitution and established what needed to be addressed on not just her physical symptoms but also her beliefs, thoughts and emotions.

At the heart of the SEED programme lies nutrition and detoxification. Eliminating allergies and food intolerances, stabilizing blood sugar levels and finding foods high in the nutrients, that Michelle was lacking was of paramount importance. Some supplementation was required, but the focus was to use food-based nutrition rather than a synthetic pill form.

Methodically, stage by stage, Michelle undertook herbal cleanses for each of her body organs and systems, in combination with a series of fasting days. This part of the programme intensified the detoxification process, addressing residual heavy metals that showed up and parasites present within her system.

Getting Michelle to chart her temperature was essential in order to see her fertility patterns and natural body rhythms. Charting can be an effective tool for not only helping to conceive, but also useful as a natural contraceptive method.³ I also use charting as a tool to help women identify their natural cycle, how energy and emotion ebb and flow accordingly and to encourage them to work with their body's rhythm rather than against it.

From Michelle's charts and kinesiology assessment, I interpreted a weak endocrine system including low thyroid function (which, incidentally, was part of her family history but had not been revealed by her previous medical tests). Selective herbal and homeopathic preparations were used to provide support and balance here. Herbal preparations were also used for douches to ensure the pelvic area was clear of infections.

Michelle delved deep into her beliefs and emotions about herself, her life and relationship. She was truly committed to her treatment and made some strong lifestyle decisions; one being not to travel to her sister-in-law's wedding in America so as not to be affected by radiation from flying or the chemical sprays used within the plane.

Shortly after the end of her programme Michelle wrote to me announcing that she was pregnant. She had surprised everyone, especially the doctors! In July this year she gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, Ellie.

Conclusions

The way to pregnancy does not have to be solely through the conventional route of synthetic hormones and IVF. I believe that the natural approach can be more effective. Research published by Dr Neil Ward in the *Journal of Nutritional and Environmental Medicine* supports this.⁴ He describes how 367 'infertile' couples participated in a preconception care study in which 89% of the women subsequently became pregnant and

gave birth to well-developed babies. None were malformed or transferred to baby care units.

It is encouraging to come across results backed by research to show the effectiveness of Natural Medicine! Are we spending excessive amounts of money putting couples through unnecessary IVF treatments when, as a first stage, a natural programme could be the answer in enhancing a couple's overall health as well as their baby's?

References and Further Reading

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About the Author

Rumana Zahn is a multi-disciplined practitioner, principally naturopathy and herbal medicine. She runs clinics in Newcastle (within a GP's practice), Darlington and Seaham Hall's exclusive Serenity Spa. She is one of the Advisors to the Institute of Complementary Medicine, is a member of the British Register of Complementary Practitioners and runs her own courses and retreats. She speaks and lectures regularly on the subject of Natural Medicine. She may be contacted on Tel: 01325 722803 or via info@rumanahealth.com; www.rumanahealth.com



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