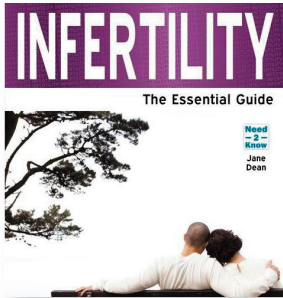


Book Reviews



Infertility: The Essential Guide

By Jane Dean

I must first say that I am a fertility nurse so I am reviewing this from a healthcare provider perspective and not a patient perspective. I should

also say that I am not wholly against alternative or complementary therapies and I do feel that they have a place.

The author gives good basic definitions of hormones and cycles and how to chart your cycle to pinpoint key times for conception. Eating a healthy well-balanced diet, getting adequate sleep and sensible advice on drug and alcohol use are all keeping in line with advice currently seen as 'best practice'. The advice on having an STI and health check before commencing trying-to-conceive is sensible as finding blocked fallopian tubes and/or poor sperm could save a lot of wasted time for couples.

Throughout the book I found that there was an emotive use of language and I really felt that a specific agenda was being pushed which was at odds with the advantages versus disadvantages stance that was initially presented. No research is referenced or if it is it only references those publications that support the claims being made. For example, the author references research into the efficacy of acupuncture at the

time of embryo transfer to support her claim, but doesn't mention that there have been three main research papers on this subject. One says it helps, one says it harms and one says it doesn't do anything! I also came across a factual error in the chapter on ART regarding AMH, specifically that it could only be measured on Day 3 of a cycle when in fact it can be measured at any point.

One main point I was concerned to read was regarding the concept of increasing peoples vitamins and mineral intake to create a 'deposit account' which is essentially reserves for the baby in their early years. I was very concerned that there was the inclusion of fat soluble vitamins on this list. Excess fat soluble vitamins (ie, vitamin A) cannot be easily excreted from the body and toxic levels can be reached much more easily and the damage is mainly irreversible.

In conclusion the question I have to ask myself is: would I recommend this as a good resource for people beginning their fertility journey. The short answer is no. I did not feel that there was any information contained here that could not be found in a quick internet search, which would probably yield much more detailed explanations and from more reliable sources. I also felt that there was a specific agenda being pushed through the use of emotive language and isolated statements that seemed to have no substantiating arguments to accompany them.

Trudi Campbell
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