

BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care
BMHP 5001

Complementary Therapies

Lecturer: Joanna Walsh

An individual supporting paper

Osteopathy

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INTRODUCTION

This research is about Complementary Therapy - Osteopathy. It explains the meaning of each of these therapies Complementary, Alternative and Orthodox, and how they differ.

The paper provides an overview of the history, uses and contraindications of the Osteopathy treatment and a comparison of it with traditional treatment methods.

Finally, an assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of the osteopathic treatment, in general, will be given.

COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES

Conventional health care does not include Complementary and Alternative Methods (CAM). Aromatherapy, Homeopathy, Meditation, Osteopathy, and Acupuncture are CAM examples (NHS, 2022).

The US National Centre for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) employs this definition of CAM:

- When non-basic health care is used with mainstream medicine, it's believed to be "complementary" therapy.
- When non-basic health care is used instead of mainstream medicine, it's believed to be an "alternative" therapy.

These groups may overlap. For example, acupuncture can treat migraine as a complementary therapy and toothache as an alternative (NHS, 2019).

Orthodox medicine has other names, such as: allopathic medicine, biomedicine, conventional medicine, mainstream medicine, and Western medicine (medicine, n.d.). It is an organised structure where medical professionals treat patients with drugs, radiation, or surgery.

DEFINITION OF OSTEOPATHY

Osteopathy is a branch of clinical medicine that includes providing medical care for patients with somatic dysfunctions at the stage of prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation. These are based on the anatomical and functional structure of the body, with which manual recovery methods are used. Osteopathy is one of the few manual disciplines regulated by the World Health Organization. According to the WHO, Osteopathy is:

“A system of medicine that emphasises the theory that the body can produce its own medicines under normal structural relationships, environmental conditions and nutrition. It

differs from allopathy primarily because it pays more attention to body mechanics and manipulative techniques in diagnosis and therapy” (WHO, 2010).

The basic principle of Osteopathy is based on the concept of the interconnectedness of all parts of the body; that is, if any organ is sick, then other organs of the system will compensate for its work. This can cause pain, tension, and inflammation. As George Northup observed in Osteopathic Medicine, The American Reformation:

The musculoskeletal system is closely related with all other body systems through the voluntary and involuntary nervous systems.

Thus, it indicates that the muscle and skeletal systems are a reflector of health and illness, in response, as it equally reacting to inflammation and pain from disease in other body systems (Northup, 1966). Currently, there are several types of Osteopathy:

- **Cranial Osteopathy** is a technique for manipulating the bones of the skull.
- **Sacral Osteopathy** restores the balance of the whole body.
- **Visceral Osteopathy** is a method that affects the organs of the genitourinary and digestive systems.
- **Structural Osteopathy** is applied to the neuromuscular-skeletal system.
- **Energetic Osteopathy** is a combination of classical techniques with traditional Chinese medicine.

HISTORY OF OSTEOPATHY

Osteopathy was created in 1874 by Andrew Taylor Still. The word comes from the Greek language, bone (osteon) and suffering (pathos). The son of a priest, he attended the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Kansas City, Kansas, fought in the Civil War.

Still believed that the physician's role is to help the body's innate ability to heal itself and argued that the physician could promote health through manipulative techniques on the musculoskeletal system. His goal was not to create a new separate profession; he wanted to rationalise the current system of medicine of the 19th century, giving it a more scientific basis. (CristalWind.ca, 2008)

Andrew Still opened the American School of Osteopathy in Kirksville in 1892 with a class of 17. The main subjects were Anatomy, Histology Physiology, Toxicology and Manipulation.

In Great Britain, the first British School of Osteopathy appeared in 1917 at Buckingham Gate London. It was founded by the minister of the Church of Scotland, John Martin Littlejohn (1865-1947). He was one of the first students at the American School of Osteopathy (ASO), where he met A Still.

The school was located in Buckingham Gate London until the 1980s, and from the mid-1990s to the present day, it is located on Borough High Street in London. The first enrolment consisted of 20 students who were to receive a diploma in Osteopathy. The school graduates more than 100 students who, after studying for four years, receive a qualification with a Master's degree in Osteopathy (M.Ost).

In the UK, there are currently eleven osteopathic education institutions, providing undergraduate training lasting four years, and post-graduate osteopathic training, which is recognised, and quality assured by the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) every three to five years. (McGivern, 2015).

PURPOSE AND USES OSTEOPATHY

According to the GOsC osteopathy is:

“A system of diagnosis and treatment for a wide range of medical conditions. It works with the structure and function of the body. It is based on the principle that the well-being of an individual depends on the skeleton, muscles, ligaments, and connective tissues functioning smoothly together” (Anon., 2021).

Osteopathy is centred on the idea that wellbeing is strictly linked to their bones, muscles, ligaments and connective tissue working smoothly together.

According to the NHS, the treatment is practical and includes skilful manipulation of the spine and joints and soft tissue massage with the purpose of:

- grow joint mobility,
- relieve muscle tension,
- alleviate pain,
- increasing the blood circulation in tissues,
- assist to the body to heal (NHS, 2021).

For example, Osteopathy can be used to alleviate cancer symptoms, specifically, to relieve side effects after radiotherapy, and chemotherapy. The practitioner can restore mobility after

surgery, improve blood circulation in the body, reduce pain and sometimes nausea. (Cancer News, 2015).

According to the NHS, osteopathy can be used to improve the following conditions: conditions affecting muscles, bones, and joints, such as: lower back pain, neck pain (not after injury), arthritis, sports injuries, shoulder and elbow pain, complication with the legs, hips and pelvis, muscle and joint pain connected with driving, work, or pregnancy NHS, 2021).

EFFICACY OF OSTEOPATHY

British pharmacologist and supporter of evidence-based medicine David Colquhoun says that

“There is very little reason to believe that this manipulation works. People recover with almost the same success, regardless of whether this type of treatment was given or not.”

Clinical studies of the effectiveness of OT are complicated by the fact that the impact is manual. For example,

lower back pain (LBP) is a global problem and is not only a medical problem but also a social and economic problem as it is one of the leading reasons for seeking medical attention and disability in people of different ages. Typically, with LBP, a GP will prescribe pain relievers, give advice on rest and work, and refer you to a physical therapist. To improve the quality of life and reduce disability, new approaches to implementing preventive strategies are needed. Thus, improving nutrition and exercise effectively can be used from early childhood to prevent back pain (Potekhina Yulia, 2018).

Randomised Controlled Trials (RCT) are considered the best way to get an estimate of the effectiveness of a particular therapy.

UK BEAM Trial "The United Kingdom Back Pain, Exercise and Manipulation Randomized Trial: Cost-Effectiveness of Physical Treatments for Back Pain in Primary Care." compared the benefits of spinal manipulation and exercise in General practice (GP) for patients consulting for back pain. (11 & 10.1136/bmj.38282.607859.AE, 2004).

The UK BEAM authors concluded that cheaper to cure patients who received manipulation and exercises, and the results were much better than the patients that received medical care.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

Osteopathy is one of the few alternative treatments that have fewer contraindications. It makes it possible to diagnose and treat people of different age groups. The likelihood of harm caused by osteopathic treatment is low. It can be minimised, but there are still contraindications. According to the NHS, Osteopathy is contraindicated for people with the following diseases:

- Osteoporosis,
- Fractures,
- Acute inflammatory conditions (types of arthritis),
- Infections,
- Blood clotting disorders (haemophilia),
- Cancer,
- Multiple sclerosis (NHS, 2021).

Any condition that can lead to bleeding, or the risk of its occurrence, a condition requiring urgent medical attention (appendicitis, intracerebral bleeding), the presence of an unspecified diagnosis, all is an absolute contraindication to osteopathic treatment.

CONCLUSION

There is no agreement on Osteopathy. Most studies do not support its effectiveness. The osteopathic treatment provides an individual approach to patients and permits the reduction of the drug load and the risk of developing polypharmacy. It works well with other treatment methods, but financial costs and lost treatment opportunities by prescribing potentially ineffective treatment may be significant.

In most cases, Osteopathy treatment should add rather than replace proven methods. The patient and doctor may waste time.

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APPENDIX: Assessment 1 Micro-Teach Session, WEEK 9



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Assessment Component 1 Micro-teach Session

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Introduction



- What are Complementary Therapies
- Definition of Osteopathy
- History of Osteopathy
- Purposes and uses of Osteopathy
- Efficacy
- Contraindications
- Conclusion

Complementary therapies

The US National Centre for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) employs this definition:

- When no– basic health care is used with mainstream medicine, it's believed to be "complementary" therapy.
- When a non-basic health care is used instead of mainstream medicine, it's believed to be an "alternative" therapy.

Examples: **Homeopathy, Osteopathy, Acupuncture, Herbal medicines** (NHS, 2022)

- Orthodox therapy is an organised structure where medical professionals treat patients with **drugs, radio therapy, or surgery**.

Orthodox medicine has other names: **allopathic medicine, biomedicine, conventional medicine, mainstream medicine, and Western medicine** (medicine, n.d.)

Definition of Osteopathy

According to the WHO, Osteopathy is

“A system of medicine that emphasises the theory that the body can produce its own medicines under normal structural relationships, environmental conditions and nutrition. It differs from allopathy primarily because it pays more attention to body mechanics and manipulative techniques in diagnosis and therapy” (WHO, 2010).

Types of Osteopathy:

- **Cranial** is a technique for manipulating the bones of the skull.
- **Sacral** is restores the balance of the whole body.
- **Visceral** is a method that affects the organs of the genitourinary and digestive systems.

History of Osteopathy

- Osteopathy was created in 1874 by Andrew Taylor Still.
- American School of Osteopathy in Kirksville in 1892 ; subjects were Anatomy, Histology Physiology, Toxicology and Manipulation.
- The first British School of Osteopathy appeared in 1917 at Buckingham Gate London (John Martin Littlejohn)

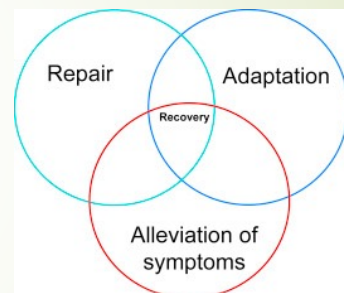
The word comes from the Greek language, **bone** (osteon) and **suffering** (pathos).



Purposes of Osteopathy

According to the NHS, the treatment is practical and includes skilled manipulation of the spine and joints and soft tissue massage with the purpose of:

- ❖ Grow joint mobility
- Relieve muscle tension
- Alleviate pain
- Increasing the blood circulation in tissues
- Assist to the body heal (NHS, 2019)



Uses of Osteopathy



For example, Osteopathy can be used to alleviate cancer symptoms, specifically, to relieve side effects after radiotherapy, and chemotherapy.

- restore mobility after surgery,
- improve blood circulation in the body,
- reduce pain,
- sometimes nausea,
- Stress (Cancer News, 2015).



Efficacy

British pharmacologist and supporter of evidence-based medicine David Colquhoun says that

- "There is very little reason to believe that this manipulation works. People recover with almost the same success, regardless of whether this type of treatment was given or not."

According to the NHS, today, there is some evidence that osteopathy may be effective in :

- some types of neck,
- shoulder or lower-limb pain,
- some types of headaches,
- recovery after hip or knee operations (NHS, 2021)

Contraindications

According to the NHS, Osteopathy is contraindicated for people with the following diseases:

- Osteoporosis,
- Fractures,
- acute inflammatory conditions (types of arthritis),
- Infections,
- blood clotting disorders (haemophilia),
- Cancer.

(NHS, 2021)

Conclusion

- The osteopathic treatment provides an individual approach to patients.
- Permits the reduction of the drug load and the risk of developing polypharmacy.
- It works well with other treatment methods.
- Financial costs and lost treatment opportunities by prescribing potentially ineffective treatment may be significant.
- In most cases, Osteopathy treatment should add rather than replace proven methods.

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