An investigation of patient experiences of treatment in the cranial field of osteopathy

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Abstract

There is a wealth of information available in print and other forms of media about osteopathy in general. Significantly less information exists about osteopathy in the cranial field (OCF), and still less information is available surrounding the experience of treatment by OCF. This study helps to fill this deficiency identified in the research literature and possibly further inform the practice of OCF.

This is a hermeneutic phenomenological study informed by the work of van Manen (1997), reflecting the need for research of a qualitative nature in the field of osteopathy. Interviews were conducted with five people, referred by several practitioners of osteopathy, who had experienced treatment in OCF. These interviews were then transcribed and analysed. It was discovered that there were common threads of experience for all the participants. Thematic analysis of the data revealed two prominent themes. The first ‘The appearance of health’ explored aspects of the therapeutic relationship, its interaction with the participant’s own innate healing ability and the resulting reports of improved health. The second theme ‘Sensations that signal change’ illuminated the participants’ more esoteric descriptions of the experience of OCF, including physical and emotional sensations.

These findings are discussed alongside past and current osteopathic literature. Implications for both the osteopathic profession and health profession in general are explored along with suggestions for further research possibilities.

Keywords: osteopathic medicine in the cranial field, patient experiences, OCF

ANZSRC Field of Research: Medical and Health Sciences (320000)
The effect and evidence of osteopathic manipulative treatment and osteopathy in the cranial field is scarce and their use are controversial. The purpose of this pilot study was to evaluate the effectiveness of osteopathic manipulative treatment and osteopathy in the cranial field in temporomandibular disorders.

Methods: A randomized clinical trial in patients with temporomandibular disorders was performed. Forty female subjects with long-term temporomandibular disorders (>3 months) were included. At enrollment, subjects were randomly assigned into two groups: (1) osteopathic manipulative tr... Erratum to “Patient perception of practitioner intention in osteopathy in the cranial field – A preliminary investigation” [International Journal of Osteopathic Medicine 2006;9(1):46].

These questions addressed safety issues, efficacy, personal experience, patient referrals, interest in learning more about alternative medicine, and whether alternative medicine should be provided at the regional hospital. The number of positive responses was totaled as a positive opinion score (POS) for each respondent.