

Collected Scientific Research Relating to the Use of Osteopathy with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (chronic fatigue syndrome?)

Important:

1) Osteopathy involves helping people's own self-healing abilities to work better, rather than focussing primarily on particular conditions.

2) Each person is different, and osteopathy treats them differently.

Therefore people respond to osteopathic treatment in different ways. Treatments that work for one person cannot be guaranteed to work for another person in the same way. The fact that there is scientific research supporting a treatment in a group of people does not mean that it will always work in the same way (which is probably true of all research).

A number of things make research into osteopathy challenging. These include the two aspects of osteopathy mentioned above, and also the lack of major commercial interests to provide funding in expectation of financial returns. At the same time, there is an emerging body of research demonstrating the usefulness of osteopathic treatment.

More research is being done all of the time. I am not aware of any research which shows that osteopathic treatment, delivered by a qualified osteopath, is ineffective in relation to this area. If you are aware of any studies that show that, please bring them to my attention.

Please note: there is room for debate about the classifications used for these studies. Please let John Smartt know if you believe that any of these classifications are incorrect.

These studies are from peer-reviewed journals

Number of studies: 1

Clinically and statistically significant results

Number of studies: 1

Randomised controlled trials

Number of studies: 1

Perrin RN, Edwards J, Hartley P 1998 **An evaluation of the effectiveness of osteopathic treatment on symptoms associated with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis. A preliminary report**
Journal of Medical Engineering & Technology January/February

"The term Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) was initially used in the 1950s. ME describes a syndrome where there is general muscle pain associated with evidence of a disturbed nervous system. ME, commonly referred to as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), or post-viral fatigue syndrome is a condition in which mental and physical fatigue predominate. It is characterized by gross abnormal muscle fatigue which occurs after relatively mild activity. Other symptoms regularly complained of include sleep disturbance, headaches, cognitive dysfunction, feeling depressed, bouts of low grade fever (not exceeding 38.6C), increased sensitivity to light, back and neck pain, sore throat, irritable bowel and bladder. The symptoms of ME typically become apparent following a viral infection"

"There has been a long-standing debate over the naming of this disorder. Some have expressed the opinion that ME is a highly specific disease, whereas CFS is an umbrella term covering many conditions which exhibit fatigue."

"The treatment of each ME patient consisted of the following techniques:

- (1) Soft tissue massage of the paravertebral muscles, the trapezii, levator scapulae, rhomboids and muscles of respiration.
- (2) High and low velocity manipulation of the thoracic and upper lumbar spinal segments using supine and side-lying combined leverage and thrust techniques.
- (3) Gentle articulation of thoracic and upper lumbar spine, plus the ribs. This was achieved by both long and short lever techniques.
- (4) Functional techniques to the suboccipital region and the sacrum.
- (5) Stimulation of the cranio-sacral rhythm by functional-cranial techniques.
- (6) Efflourage to aid drainage in thoracic and cervical lymphatic vessels.
- (7) Exercises to improve the mobility of the thoracic spine, and to improve the physical coordination."

"Our hypothesis, based on clinical evidence, is that following osteopathic treatment the symptoms are reduced due to stabilizing nffment sympathetic flow. It is believed by the authors that this equilibrium may be achieved due to relaxation of soft tissue and an improvement in visceral function plus increased blood and lymph circulation."

"This present study has revealed a demonstrable improvement in ME symptoms as a result of osteopathic treatment."