

Recent research



The following papers are available to UK registered osteopaths and final year osteopathy students via the ozone, the General Osteopathic Council website:

<https://www.osteopathy.org.uk/ozone/resources/research/research-journals/>

Roffey D, Wai E, Bishop P, Kwon B, Dagenais S. **Causal assessment of occupational sitting and low back pain: results of a systematic review.** *The Spine Journal*, 2010, 10(3); 252-261. Available online at <http://bit.ly/lbpsitting>

Roffey D, Wai E, Bishop P, Kwon B, Dagenais S. **Causal assessment of occupational standing or walking and low back pain: results of a systematic review.** *The Spine Journal*, 2010, 10(3);262-272. Available online at <http://bit.ly/lbpstandingwalking>

Wai E, Roffey D, Bishop P, Kwon B, Dagenais S. **Causal assessment of occupational bending or twisting and low back pain: results of a systematic review.** *The Spine Journal*, 2010, 10(1);76-88. Available online at <http://bit.ly/lbpbendingtwisting>

Wai E, Roffey D, Bishop P, Kwon B, Dagenais S. **Causal assessment of awkward occupational postures and low back pain: results of a systematic review.** *The Spine Journal*, 2010, 10(1);89-99. Available online at <http://bit.ly/lbpawkwardpostures>



Need some help making sense of the papers? Visit:

<http://www.ncor.org.uk/learning-online/critical-appraisal/> for some help with how to critically review a paper.

World Pain Congress 2014

NCOR Director Dr Dawn Carnes attended the World Pain Conference this year in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in her role as senior researcher at Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry. Dr Carnes delivers and develops "pragmatic trials". These are trials that are done in real world situations rather than clinically controlled environments.

Over 5,000 people attended the conference over 5 days. The conference included workshops, presentations, and poster presentations. Dr Carnes presented her work on the COPERS trial, a randomised controlled trial of a pain self-management course for people with chronic musculoskeletal pain. Osteopaths, along with other healthcare professionals, were trained to deliver the COPERS course which was based on cognitive behavioural principles. One year later those patients who had done the course were less depressed and more socially integrated, suggesting that COPERS could be a useful adjunct treatment in the management of those with chronic musculoskeletal pain.

A big theme at this congress was about the issues with opioid prescribing for chronic pain and patients becoming dependent. Opioids can have debilitating side effects and affect quality of life, depression is common. An interesting workshop focused on chronic pain, depression and suicide. Elements that protect patients include faith, family support (not letting the family down), future thinking, and fear of suicide failure.

Other research touched on MRI findings relating to the placebo effect, and the relationship between chronic pain and aging. One study demonstrated that exercise, in particular yoga, may decelerate age-related loss of grey matter, thereby decreasing pain perception.

The conference was enlightening, and helped give a perspective about the wider health care community in which we work.

You can read Dr Carnes' full report at <http://bit.ly/worldpainconference>

Comment on "Recent research"

All four papers listed in "Recent research" to the left conclude that various occupational factors – sitting, standing, walking, bending, twisting, and awkward postures – are "unlikely" to be "independently causative" of low back pain (LBP). To many osteopaths this seems at odds with our experience of patient reports, and our understanding of how patients come to suffer from certain symptoms. How can the authors repeatedly come to the same counterintuitive conclusion?

The Spine Journal published a letter which criticised the conclusions of the authors. The letter is available at <http://bit.ly/lbpcriticism> The brief conversation that ensues between the authors and their critic reveals the subjective decisions that underlie the systematic review process.

Among other things, the authors are criticised for:

- excluding papers on basic science and biomechanics, which may have shed more light on causes of LBP;
- misusing Austin Bradford Hill's guidelines for investigating causation – which are separately discussed at <http://bit.ly/bradfordhill>
- lacking awareness of fallacies relating to the interpretation of statistics.

The authors' response is published at <http://bit.ly/lbpresponse> They defend each of the points raised in the letter, stating why they made certain decisions regarding the methods they employed, and stating that their conclusions correctly follow from those methods. They do acknowledge that poor data, or poor studies, may have limited which occupational activities contribute to LBP; something perhaps they could have made clearer in each published paper.

This brief exchange reveals the complexity of the systematic review process, and illustrates how different reviewers may select different evidence. An important part of any review is to describe how such decisions are made. These decisions will always be subjective to a degree; hence objections may be raised by those with a different perspective.

International Conference on Advances in Osteopathic Research

As we go to press, news has arrived that NCOR's Carol Fawkes has won the best research poster prize at ICAOR 2015 in Brazil! This is for her work on Patient Reported Outcomes Measures (PROMS) Congratulations Carol – more on this story later. You can find out more about PROMS at <http://bit.ly/ncorproms>

Future research at NCOR

In January 2014 the OIA established the International Osteopathic Research Network (IORN) chaired by Dr Dawn Carnes.

From data collected by IORN regarding the scope of osteopathic practice, it is apparent that 10-25% of osteopaths treat babies and children regularly.

Systematic reviews in this field need updating, and tend to cover a limited range of conditions. To conduct a review, we need to raise £30,000 for NCOR to employ a researcher.

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Keeping up to date



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