

OPEn PROJECT

Exploring Patients' Expectations of Osteopathic Care

A Qualitative Study

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Funded by GOsC



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OPEn project stages

- Substantial and thorough literature review**
- Qualitative study**
- Questionnaire survey**



Why conduct a qualitative study?

To ensure the OPEn national survey questionnaire was firmly based on the reality of patients' experience and viewpoints

To elicit osteopathy specific expectations – fill the literature gap



What method was used?

- Focus groups = 6 (*25 participants*)
- Individual interviews (*9 participants*)
- Private osteopathic practices = 14
- Locations = 11 (*England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland*)



How were the interviews analysed?

Coded
extracts
from
interview
transcripts

Clustering
extracts
under
categorical
headings

Arranging
categories
under
thematic
headings



Extracts, categories and themes

Coded Extracts:

“I think you just trust him...have complete faith in him.”

If you have a good osteopath there's no risk.”

“If I have sufficient confidence...then I don't expect he would have to go into detail about risk.”

Category:

Placing trust

Theme:

INTERPERSONAL
/THERAPEUTIC
RELATIONSHIP



Key themes



Expectations of individual agency – Taking control

“Go and find out quickly and just sort it out”. “I will cut everything to see him now”

- Deciding to consult an osteopath means patients will feel in control of the situation.
- The osteopath will provide an explanation that helps patients understand their problems.
- Patients will gain control of their pain even if it involves financial sacrifice



Expectations of professional expertise – Practitioner selection

“...any kind of stiffness and soreness the osteopath will automatically be able to fix me.”

- The osteopath will have:
 - specialist knowledge of musculoskeletal and related problems
 - wider knowledge of other types of intervention and links to other health care professionals
- The osteopath can be trusted to behave in a professional manner with clear boundaries



Expectations about customer experience

“...you’re paying for a service, but you expect not only just your money’s worth, but you expect everything else, the follow-up and the care that goes with that as well.”

- The practice will be flexible about appointment times and see patients quickly if they are in severe pain.
- The service offered will provide value for money in an environment that promotes rapport-building and healing.



Expectations of therapeutic/treatment process

“I would expect to describe my problem, be examined visually, to be examined manually, and then manipulation to put back whatever’s misplaced.”

- Consultations will provide sufficient time for thorough examination, diagnosis and manual treatment.
- Treatments will be spaced at appropriate intervals to improve symptoms.
- An estimate of the likely course of treatment and outcome will be provided (e.g. number of treatments that might be required before relief of symptoms).



Expectations of therapeutic/treatment process *cont...*

“...you’re paying for a service, but you expect not only just your money’s worth, you expect everything else, the follow-up and care that goes with that as well.”

- The osteopath will provide effective treatments and reduce the need for medication.
- Patients will not be exploited (e.g. given treatment with little chance of improvement, or being advised to return for unnecessary follow-up).
- On-going maintenance treatments will be offered as an option, if required.
- Patients will be involved in planning treatment and in self-management if they wish.



Expectations of interpersonal/therapeutic relationship

“I think you just trust him. If he says I’m going to try this, you trust him that that’s the right thing, because you have complete faith in him.”

- A trusting relationship with the osteopath is desirable.
- The osteopath believes, takes the problem seriously, and cares about the outcome.
- The patient has confidence in the osteopath.
- Clear boundaries of touch.
- Confidentiality.
- ✦ • Discussion of safety, a potential side effects

Key themes



Limitations of the qualitative study

- The views expressed in the qualitative data were predominantly those of white British users of osteopathy.
- There was insufficient data to identify similarities and comparisons in perspectives across different ethnic categories.
- The majority of participants were long-term users of osteopathy services - recall of initial expectations may have been coloured by subsequent experience.



Implications for professional training and CPD

- Enhanced inter-personal skills development.
- Judgement of clinical risks.
- Professional conduct and boundaries in respect of touch and clinical examination – *a GP model?*
- Enhanced awareness of other types of health care intervention - *forge links with other healthcare professionals for referral purposes.*



Positive messages re; osteopathy

- Respect
- Trust
- First choice
- Long term relationship
- Specialist knowledge



Any questions?



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