



**University of Brighton**

**The OPEn project investigating patients'  
expectations of osteopathic care**

**SUPPLEMENT FOR NHS PARTICIPANTS**

Janine Leach, Vinette Cross, Carol Fawkes, Anne Mandy, Matthew Hankins, Adam Fiske,  
Laura Bottomley, Ann Moore

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**Study web site:** <http://www.patientexpectationstudy.org.uk/>

**Other reports on this study are available from the [GOsC web site](#). Titles are:**

- **The OPEn project investigating patients' expectations of osteopathic care: Full Research Report**
- **The OPEn project investigating patients' expectations of osteopathic care: Report for osteopaths and the public**
- **The OPEn project investigating patients' expectations of osteopathic care: Summary Report**

**Contact details for further copies:**

Dr Janine Leach, Clinical Research Centre for Health Professions, University of Brighton, Aldro Building, 49 Darley Road, Eastbourne, BN20 7UR

## **Supplement for NHS participants**

This supplement focuses on the data gathered within NHS osteopathic services included in the OPEn project, and is designed to be read alongside the reports of the full study as listed on the previous page. Readers can choose, depending on the level of detail required, to look at the Summary Report, or the Report for Osteopaths and the Public, or the Full Research Report.

The first phase of the study, the review of existing evidence about patients' expectations of osteopathic care included many papers from studies within the context of the NHS settings in a range of primary and secondary care services, and the existing evidence as presented in the reports of the OPEn project represents what was known about the expectations of healthcare among NHS patients at the time of the study (2009-10). There was no direct evidence available from the literature on the expectations of osteopathic patients in any kind of service; this study was the first formal research within osteopathy.

In the second phase of the study, focus group discussions and individual interviews were conducted with a diverse range of osteopathic patients in order to gain understanding of their expectations of osteopathic care. Of the 45 participants in this phase, 20% were drawn from NHS practices. The analysis revealed the expectations of patients attending three types of osteopathic service: private practices, the training clinics at osteopathic educational institutions, and NHS services. It was found that the same issues arose in relation to expectation in all three types of service. The analysis of the data from the NHS interviews and focus groups was conducted independently of that from the other services, in order to identify whether any new themes or topics emerged. No new aspects of expectation were found, despite the fact that the sample of NHS patients differed from the private patients sample in many ways. They differed in socio-demographic, ethnic and health characteristics; the way in which patients can exert their individual agency and gain access to professional expertise within the NHS is also different. Their anxieties and concerns were the same but perhaps differed in emphasis.

NHS patients did not take part in the third phase of the study, which was a questionnaire survey to quantify the extent to which the expectations of NHS osteopathic patients are met or unmet. For a number of reasons, the survey evaluated the extent of unmet expectation within private osteopathic practices only. NHS practices were excluded for two reasons. Statistically, the sample of patients from the NHS would have been too small to provided meaningful information on NHS patients' views. Secondly, NHS Ethical approval could not be obtained within the study timescale. Methodologically, the survey reliability was increased by targeting a more homogeneous survey population. As a result, the extent to which patients' expectations are met or unmet within NHS osteopathic services is still unknown.

Further research is therefore needed to evaluate the extent of unmet expectations within NHS osteopathic services. The experiences gained in conducting the NHS focus groups will assist in the design of a scientifically sound survey in the future within the NHS. The questionnaire that was developed in the course of this study is a resource for the future research.