

Systematic review of paediatric patients

We are progressing through the early stages of our review, and our initial search identified thousands of potentially useful papers. Our first reading of all those abstracts revealed that nearly 1,600 appear relevant. This number will shrink considerably as we read the papers in detail, group them in various ways, and determine which are eligible for full review.

Eventually we will end up with tens of papers that we will analyse in detail. However, many of the papers that we are discounting from this study may still be of interest to others doing similar research. Consequently, we are recording our findings thus far, in order to save future researchers a lot of time and effort.

Centre For Reviews volunteers

Our group of volunteers are exploring various themes in order to produce bite-sized evidence summaries for practicing osteopaths. We've identified around 8 themes where we feel that lots of robust evidence has recently come to light, and our volunteers are currently searching for more.

Each volunteer is supported by NCOR by email and phone calls, helping answer any tricky questions, and determining the best way that all volunteers can produce consistent summaries. It's hard work, and we are all finding our way to some extent, but it will all be worth it when the final summaries are available!

NICE guidelines for low back pain and sciatica

The National Institute for Health Care Excellence (NICE) released the draft of their guidelines for low back pain and "sciatica", and NCOR were invited to provide feedback as a stakeholder in the consultation process.

Our feedback to NICE focused on the consistency with which research had been selected and interpreted. The draft appeared to give extra credence towards lab-based studies such as randomized controlled trials while down-grading evidence from more pragmatic studies (i.e. those conducted "in the field"). Pragmatic trials are considered among the best quality of evidence that can

be attained in circumstances where "masking" may be difficult to achieve.

We also suggested that further trials into manual therapies should be included in the recommendations for further research. The draft recommendations were strongly geared toward pharmacological and surgical interventions. Our recommendations included sub-grouping patients in trials of manual therapies where possible in order to determine those who respond best to hands-on treatment. This approach may help isolate and improve the "active component" in a trial, and help distinguish it from placebo effects and other confounding factors.

While these guidelines largely apply to NHS practitioners, they set a *de facto* standard within the UK and provide inspiration for healthcare models beyond the UK.

NCOR conference 2017

January 2017 will see NCOR provide a day-long conference which will be available to all osteopaths. We are lining-up several guest speakers who will present research on current thinking regarding persistent pain. The afternoon session will be a series of practical workshops so delegates will be able to put the lessons into practise as soon as they return to their clinics.

Tickets are likely to cost in the region of £99 and we will offer an "early-bird" discounted price. You will receive a full day of CPD-relevant information, as well as lunch and refreshments.

Our first conference will be held in London, although we appreciate that many osteopaths do not find it easy to travel to London for a full day. Consequently we hope to repeat the course in the north of England later in the year. Let us know your thoughts by emailing info@ncor.org.uk

Positive stories from patients

Our website for collecting Patient Reported Experiences of Osteopathic Services (PREOS) has seen a surge of recent activity – many thanks to all osteopaths who have mentioned this service to their patients.

The overwhelming majority of reports are positive, which reinforces the suspicion that our patients generally think very highly of us. This data is hugely valuable for the profession, especially given the increasing pressure on osteopaths to demonstrate the value of what we do.

We will always need more data, so **please** ask your patients to give us their feedback. It is entirely anonymous, and is used by the profession to understand how we can continue to improve osteopathic practice.

PREOS is available at <http://www.ncorpreos.org.uk>

Latest evidence summary for low back and neck pain

NCOR's senior research office Carol Fawkes has compiled our latest summaries of evidence relating to low back and neck pain. Fifty-nine studies have been summarised, so there is plenty of material to consider.

When reading research, remember that it is up to you to consider whether you think it is of a high enough quality to influence your practise. There are several tools available to help assess research quality, such as the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme checklist.

The CASP checklist is available at <http://bit.ly/casp-checklist>

NCOR's evidence summaries are available at <http://www.ncor.org.uk/research/evidence-for-osteopathy/>

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