

National Council for



Osteopathic Research

Annual Report
May 2015 – April 2016



Barts and The London
School of Medicine and Dentistry

www.smd.qmul.ac.uk

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I DIRECTOR'S SUMMARY

NCOR in 2015–16 has had a year of consolidation, integration and some initiation.

Our patient reporting platforms were operationalised and utilised, and our first analysis of data has shown that the Patient Incident Learning and Reporting System (PILARS) for use by osteopaths has produced a variety of interesting incidents and constructive comments. The Patient Reported Experiences of Osteopathic Services (PREOS) system has had a slow uptake, but the content is useful to illustrate the patient perspective. The national database for patient reported outcomes is now implemented, and we have around 63 osteopaths and their patients signed up to date.

Initial analysis of data shows that patients are responding well to osteopathic treatment and report positive experiences.

This year saw the emergence of our Centre for Reviews; we welcomed Dr Clare Miles to the NCOR team to carry out the paediatric review, which was part-funded by the crowd fundraising initiative from the previous year. We also have six volunteers who we are training in reviewing techniques, and who are updating some of our snapshot summaries and doing some new research.

We continue to disseminate research information to osteopaths using our website, the osteopathic magazines and social media, which have in some instances generated lots of activity: one particular article generated nearly 5,000 views. In addition to osteopathic educational institution talks this year, we have attended six regional society meetings to talk about the work of NCOR and how getting involved with the patient reported outcomes data collection exercise will help the profession.

We continue to maintain a strong presence in the international arena, and the NCOR Director was asked by the Osteopathic International Alliance to represent the profession at a World Health Organization taskforce to discuss and address the issues surrounding research into complementary and alternative healthcare throughout the world.

Queen Mary University of London, Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry continue to support NCOR, as do most of the osteopathic education institutions, and this year we welcomed the Sutherland Cranial College of Osteopathy as a member of NCOR.

Dawn Carnes
Director

II BACKGROUND

The role of NCOR is to promote for the public benefit the advancement of education and the promotion of good health, in particular but not exclusively by facilitating and promoting osteopathic research, representing the profession, and disseminating osteopathic relevant research information.

NCOR is funded by donations from the General Osteopathic Council, the Institute of Osteopathy, the osteopathic education institutions and the Osteopathic Educational Foundation, and by other generous donations from members of public, osteopaths and supporters.

Dr Dawn Carnes is the NCOR director (one day per week), Carol Fawkes is the Senior Research Officer and Austin Plunkett is the Research Assistant (both three days per week), Dr Clare Miles is our new systematic reviewer on a one-year contract (two days per week).

III KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2015–2016

1. Dissemination

Website

Approximately 1,600 people visit our website per month. Mobile and tablet access continues to grow, with access by these devices approaching 20% while desktop access has dropped to 80%.

Social media

We now have 1,320 Twitter followers. Our Facebook page is well reviewed and liked, with over 1,362 followers. We gain about one follower per day on both social media sites.

Our most popular post on Facebook, highlighting a research article, was viewed 4,800 times; additionally it was 'liked' 48 times and 'shared' 34 times. An average Facebook post by NCOR is viewed by 700–800 people.

Twitter attracts a higher average number of views compared to Facebook (approximately 1,800 per tweet) although a lower maximum number of views (approximately 2,500). This approximates to our tweets being seen 230 times per day.

Outreach visits

This year, we decided to increase the number of face-to-face contacts with the profession to promote NCOR and our projects for patient reported outcomes and our adverse event learning platforms. We made presentations at the osteopathic educational institutions (five), osteopathic regional societies (six), the Sutherland Cranial College conference and training day, and the General Osteopathic Council Regional Communications Network day.

Promotion of NCOR and presentations

We have also presented our work at:

- the Institute of Osteopathy convention – November 2015, Staines, UK
- the Osteopathic International Alliance conference (oral presentation on app development and quantitative findings) – 27th September 2015, Montreal, Canada
- William Harvey Research Day at Queen Mary University of London (poster presentation) – 20th October 2015, London, UK
- the Society for Back Pain Research conference (oral presentation and poster presentation) – 5th and 6th November 2015, Bournemouth, UK
- the PROMs summit (two posters describing quantitative and qualitative findings) – 1st December 2015, Birmingham, UK
- the Royal College of Chiropractors AGM (talk about research initiatives in osteopathy) – 28th January 2016, London, UK
- the American Osteopathic Association convention (keynote) – 15th to 17th March 2016, Orlando, USA

- the British School of Osteopathy (evaluation of the OsteoMAP programme) – 2nd April 2016, London, UK.

2. International relations

The Director of NCOR was also asked by the Osteopathic International Alliance to represent osteopathy and contribute to a World Health Organization project on the development of research in complementary and traditional medicines. This was an important working group on an international platform which will influence the global health agenda by recognising that a vast proportion of people do not have access to western medicine and rely on traditional and complementary therapies – but that we do not know enough about the effectiveness and safety of these therapies, how widely they are accessed, and the types of conditions they are used to aid.

3. Centre for reviews

In February 2016 we appointed a systematic reviewer to conduct a review of literature into manual therapy care of paediatric patients that is in part funded from money donated by our crowd fundraising campaign in 2014–15. We also recruited six volunteers, who we have trained and are supporting to undertake some research updating our snapshot summaries of evidence. These snapshots are provided to osteopaths on our website.

4. Adverse event learning and reporting platforms

Our patient incident and patient experience learning and reporting platforms, (PILARS - for collecting data from practitioners and PREOS - for collecting data from patients about their experiences of osteopathic care) have been available for use for just over a year.

Patient Reported Experiences of Osteopathic Services (PREOS)

PREOS is the learning resource for osteopaths, enabling practitioners to see how patients perceive osteopathic care and report their experience of practice (www.ncorpreos.org.uk).

To date, 16 patient reports have been submitted. Reports have been largely positive.

Patient Incident Learning and Reporting System (PILARS)

PILARS allows osteopaths to upload reports about difficult situations they have experienced in practice, with the aim that other practitioners can learn from the way they dealt with these situations; other osteopaths can also post comments on the reports. The platform can be found at: www.ncorpilars.org.uk

To date, 15 incident reports have been submitted. The comments posted relating to these reported incidents have been constructive and informative, and indicate professional maturity. We hope that the osteopaths have found this service helpful.

The reported incidents covered widely varying themes. The most common themes were:

- managing patient expectations
- worries about side-effects of osteopathic treatment
- discussing consent with patients
- clinical tests
- undetected pathology.

Less frequently reported issues included:

- dealing with unsatisfied patients
- challenging patients (dealing with patient aggression and unusual demands).

Comments posted about these incidents mainly addressed managing patient expectations. They also covered anatomy, symptom duration, involving the patient in decision-making, and risks associated with thrust techniques. Less frequently occurring themes were wide-ranging and included patient-clinician boundaries, identifying patients who have challenging needs, the value of clinical judgement, and the side-effects and benefits of treatment.

One reported incident involved a patient who experienced cervical artery dissection after treatment by an osteopath. The patient had been examined by their GP and ophthalmologist, and medicated for migraine. The osteopath undertook a peer-supervised critical incident review.

More information can be found in our PILARS [summary report](#), which can be requested via our website at: www.ncor.org.uk/contact-us/

5. Patient reported outcome measures (PROMs)

NCOR, with Clinvivo and the financial support of the Institute of Osteopathy, has developed an IT solution for data capture of patient reported outcomes after osteopathic treatment. Data are collected using a smartphone app or online facility. This project was initiated to gather data to provide evidence for the profession about the outcomes of osteopathic care on the patient population that we treat.

During the last year the PROM data collection facility has progressed. We have:

- completed all the qualitative interviews
- completed the piloting of the app
- modified the app based on the findings of the pilot
- implemented the app in clinical practice.

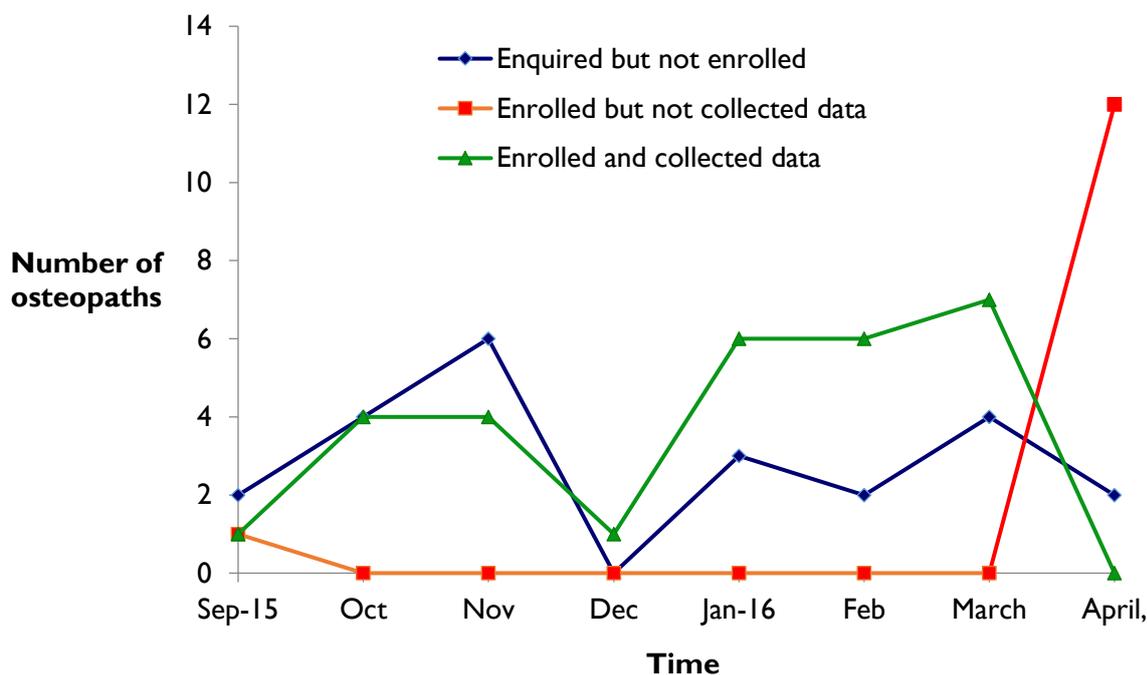
Implementation of the app

A modified version of the app for use by the profession was launched in September 2015. Although uptake has been slow, it is increasing; this increase has coincided with outreach visits and the opportunity for osteopaths to hear about the experiences of their peers when using the app. A resource pack is sent to osteopaths who sign up to implement the app in their practice, and considerable support is given by the NCOR team.

The section of the NCOR website related to PROMs (www.ncor.org.uk/practitioners/patient-reported-outcomes/) was revised when the app reached its implementation stage; there is now information for clinicians and patients describing the project, along with 'frequently asked questions'.

Since the implementation of the app began, data returns continue to rise steadily. The number of osteopaths now equipped to use the app is 63, and to date we have had 102 patients complete a baseline questionnaire, with 41 returns for a one-week follow up and 18 at six weeks.

Post-pilot data collection participation



The phone app is now available on Android, Windows and iOS (Apple) smartphone operating systems. The peer-review process required by Apple has been extensive, but having the app available in iOS format for use on iPhones and iPads should help uptake among patients.

Encouraging uptake

Communications about the development of the PROM app, and the findings of our qualitative research and quantitative analysis have, appeared in the osteopathic press (published and electronic bulletins) on a regular basis. In addition we have attended six regional society meetings, talked to students at five osteopathic educational institutions and presented the work at the General Osteopathic Council Regional Communications Network day in March 2016.

6. Advice and guidance

Information requests and advice

We received 107 formal and informal enquiries between May 2015 and April 2016 for information and advice about research, using the PROM app, where to locate information, and how to provide evidence to different stakeholders.

NCOR has been providing advice and support relating to the Advertising Standards Authority's Code of Advertising Practice and guidance for the advertising of osteopathic services. This work is ongoing and important in ensuring the quality of osteopaths' public information.

In addition, when the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) produced new draft guidance for the management of low back pain with and without sciatica, NCOR as a stakeholder submitted detailed comments on behalf of the osteopathic profession.

7. Miscellaneous developments

Future of the profession

NCOR are one of the five bodies contributing to the initiative for the development of the profession (the Osteopathic Development Group). NCOR's role is to develop the evidence base and relevant research for osteopathy, which we are continuing to do.

Regional hubs

The regional hubs continue: there are five active regional hubs. Hub meetings are run via Skype or teleconference where possible. Topics for hub meetings are selected by attendees, and are relevant to clinical practice.

Engagement with osteopathic educational institutions

The NCOR team continues to support the promotion of research in the osteopathic educational institutions through a number of methods. Talks have been delivered at six of the institutions throughout the year. Members of the NCOR team also act as external examiners and assess research presentations within some of the educational institutions.

IV THE FUTURE

1. Dissemination of information

We continue to try and make research more user-friendly and are disseminating information through the website, social media, talks at osteopathic educational institutions, and conference presentations.

2. Conference and CPD

We plan to promote NCOR and the latest research via two one-day conferences: one in London and one in the northern counties. Multi-modal care is going to be a future focus of care delivery based on new guidance, and osteopaths may need to explicitly recognise the multi-component aspect of the care they give their patients to align themselves more closely with NICE recommendations.

3. Website redesign

Our website has grown extensively over the last three years, and we will need to invest time and money updating and reorganising this resource to ensure that it is user-friendly and accessible for all online devices.

V FINANCE

This financial year we lost income from three of the osteopathic educational institutions – Leeds Beckett University (formerly Leeds Metropolitan), Oxford Brookes University and the London College of Osteopathic Medicine – owing to course closures or financial constraints. However, as NCOR has become a charity, Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry no longer charge NCOR for its overhead costs. This has offset the losses from the donations of the three educational institutions.

Income has been generated from the final payment from the British School of Osteopathy for our work on the evaluation of chronic pain service OsteoMap (£7,166), and from the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) for our work on the analysis of claims and complaints arising from insurers, the GOsC and the Institute of Osteopathy (£1,100). In addition we have received £4,363.25 in donations.

Financial summary

Full financial statements are in preparation and will be presented to the NCOR AGM later in the year.

	Income	Outgoings
Contributions from stakeholders	£106,550.00*	
Donations	£4,363.25	
Additional work	£8,266.00	
QMUL		£61,561.00
Director Honoraria		£12,000.00
Expenses		£1,809.62
Totals	£119,179.25	£75,370.62

* NB This figure includes a one-off donation from the Osteopathic Educational Foundation of £50,000 which was not intended for use in the 2015–16 financial year.

VI APPENDIX

NCOR objectives 2015–2018

To promote for the public benefit the advancement of education and the promotion of good health, in particular but not exclusively by the objectives shown in column 2 of Table 1. The final column indicates the operational and strategic tasks for 2015–18. The items in plain text are those that are undertaken by NCOR already; those in italics are projects that will require additional funding and are still to do.

Table 1. NCOR Objectives

Area	Objective	Current and future (italic) tasks
Development	Leading and facilitating osteopathic research development in the UK, including developing a comprehensive and cohesive research strategy providing both direction and coordination of osteopathic research.	Continuing the development and implementation of existing projects <i>Using the Delphi consensus study findings to prioritise studies for targeting research funding</i> Day-to-day management of NCOR activity; responding to enquiries
Representing the profession	Representing the osteopathic profession on matters relating to the osteopathic evidence base and research development. Acting on behalf of the profession, in a research context, to the media, the public and patients, policy-makers, the inter-professional research community, other health professions and healthcare regulators.	Actively seek opportunities for NCOR representation on relevant panels, development groups and professional advancement bodies, as opportunities arise Respond to requests about research as they arise and create a FAQ section about osteopathy the profession can use when discussing osteopathy in the wider health care arena
Promoting research capacity and scholarship	Providing a forum for osteopathic educational institutions (OEl) through which to forge consistent standards in research governance, share expertise, achieve economies of scale, and foster undergraduate and postgraduate research collaboration.	Four charity member meetings per annum Encourage and coordinate cross-OEI research <i>Raise funds for a new PhD studentship (2017)</i>
Dissemination of relevant research	Providing osteopaths, the public and patients, healthcare professionals, and the research and academic community with a recognised, high-quality and accessible resource of research-related information concerning the distinctive body of knowledge within osteopathic practice.	Continue to update the website and use social media to inform the profession and others of relevant work Set up a blog

Area	Objective	Current and future (<i>italic</i>) tasks
Collaboration with a view to raising funds	Improving awareness of osteopathic research development among osteopaths and the wider community. Establishing links and building networks within the research fraternity, nationally and internationally, with a view to development through collaboration. Formulating and fostering strategies to attract funding for osteopathic research development.	Continue to work with the Osteopathic International Alliance as chair of the International Osteopathic Research Network Explore fundraising opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>NCOR conference</i> • <i>CPD online</i> • <i>Identify key projects for fundraising</i> Undertake ad hoc research projects
Research governance	Providing systems relevant for grants governance and research governance, for the benefit of all stakeholders.	Update research governance guidance as required and continue to advise in this area
Research projects and professional development	Fostering and disseminating outputs from osteopathic audit, evaluation, and research activities.	Continue with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the PROMs project • developing the PILARS and PREOS sites Initiate a systematic review centre for research relevant to osteopathy