



HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY, CAM & MASSAGE THERAPY

Health psychology as a context for massage therapy: A conceptual model with CAM as mediator[☆]



Glenn M. Hymel, EdD, LMT^a, Grant J. Rich, PhD, NCTMB^b

^a Department of Psychological Sciences, Loyola University, 6363 St. Charles Ave, New Orleans, LA 70118, USA

^b International Psychology Bulletin, Juneau, Alaska, USA

Received 9 May 2013; received in revised form 1 July 2013; accepted 8 July 2013

KEYWORDS

Health psychology;
Complementary;
Alternative;
Medicine;
Massage;
Massage therapy

Summary *Health psychology* represents a context within which *massage therapy* research, education, and practice can be positioned for the mutual benefit of both. Furthermore, *complementary and alternative medicine* (CAM) more often than not plays a mediating role in relating massage therapy to health psychology. On occasion, though, the linkage between health psychology and massage therapy can be quite direct without the mediating influence of CAM. This paper, accordingly, advances a conceptual model via both flowchart and Venn diagram displays for viewing the health psychology context for massage therapy with the possibility of CAM as a mediating factor. Attention is also given to the broad range of issues constituting contemporary health psychology as well as its correspondence to an equally diverse array of client populations and health conditions addressed in massage therapy research. Future directions in the areas of health psychology, CAM, and massage therapy are proposed with a view toward a mutual and reciprocal benefit accruing to these behavioral and health science arenas.

© 2013 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

One of the principal supporting disciplines of massage therapy is that of psychology. At its generic level, psychology has been defined as “the scientific study of

behavior and mental processes” (Hockenbury and Hockenbury, 2011, p. 2). At a more specific level, this behavioral science discipline’s specialty of *health psychology* represents a context within which massage therapy can be positioned for the mutual benefit of both. One definition of health psychology is that is “focuses on the role of psychological factors in the development, prevention, and treatment of illness. Health psychology includes such areas

[☆] An initial version of this paper was presented at the International Massage Therapy Research Conference; Boston; April 25–27, 2013.

as stress and coping, the relationship between psychological factors and physical health, and ways of promoting health-enhancing behaviors” (Hockenbury and Hockenbury, 2011, p. 15).

The relationship between health psychology and massage therapy can take the form of a *direct linkage* in that the former can encompass or subsume the latter. Another possibility is that of a *mediated linkage* with the field of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) serving as the mediator between health psychology and massage therapy. This paper, accordingly, proposes a conceptual model of health psychology as a broad context for massage therapy, with the likelihood of an extensive mediating function served by CAM. While biomechanical research also is essential, such theoretical work as is presented here is also valuable, as “a useful theory organizes research data into a meaningful structure, stimulates further research, and guides actions of the practitioner over the rough course of day-to-day problems” (Fiest and Feist, 2009; pp. 7–9). Raw data may be of comparatively less value to practitioners, unless organized by theory; thus, while by nature abstract, theory informs practice, and, as Fiest and Feist (2009) note: “useful theory has a mutual and dynamic interaction with research data... data flow back into the theory and restructure it... leading to more research and additional data, which in turn reshape and enlarge the theory even more. This cyclic relationship continues for as long as the theory proves useful” (p. 8).

In support of this proposed theoretical model in this article, two recent American Psychology Association (APA) publications (Barnett and Shale, 2013a, 2013b) have actually extended the relevance of CAM to psychological research and practice in general, with massage therapy cited as one of the most widely used forms of CAM. As noted by Barnett and Shale (2013b, p.576):

In recent years there has been a greater awareness of the many benefits of CAM for promoting health and wellness as well as for ameliorating a wide range of conditions and ailments treated by psychologists and other health professionals. One vision of the future of the practice of psychology includes each psychologist developing and maintaining competence in CAM and integrating it into each client’s care as is relevant and appropriate. Support is provided for the belief that CAM will play an important role in the practice of psychology for years to come.

Fig. 1 presents a flowchart version of this conceptual model with an emphasis on (a) macro-, meso-, and micro-levels of inclusiveness corresponding to health psychology, CAM, and massage therapy, respectively, and (b) a bi-directional flow of information among the three components. A Venn diagram of the model is provided in Fig. 2 with a more visual display of the levels of subsumption across the three components.

Health psychology, massage therapy, & CAM: meanings

Health psychology

As implied by the expression itself, *health psychology* refers to “the application of psychological principles and

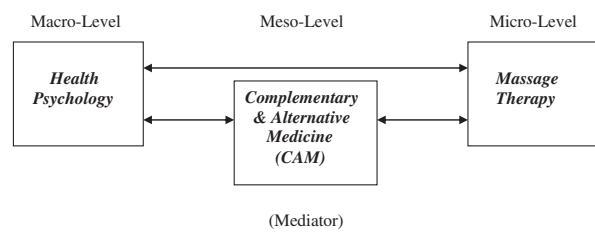


Figure 1 Conceptual Model of Health Psychology As a Context for Massage Therapy—Possibly Mediated by CAM (Flowchart Version). *NB:* Macro-, meso-, and micro-levels designate degrees of inclusiveness. Health psychology subsumes both CAM and massage therapy. Massage therapy is an immediate subset of health psychology when not mediated by CAM; otherwise, it becomes a subset of CAM. The bi-directional flow of information across levels implies that each component potentially informs, and is informed by, the other two components.

research to the enhancement of health, and the prevention and treatment of illness” (Straub, 2001, p.4). More specifically, Brannon and Feist (2010, p. 13) characterize this specialty as encompassing “...psychology’s contributions to the enhancement of health, the prevention and treatment of disease, the identification of health risk factors, the improvement of the health care system, and the shaping of public opinion with regard to health.” While overall, psychology as a discipline commonly is dated to the founding of its first laboratory by Wilhelm Wundt in 1879 in Europe (Hockenbury and Hockenbury, 2011, p. 4), health psychology has emerged more recently, and in 1978 the American Psychological Association founded its health psychology

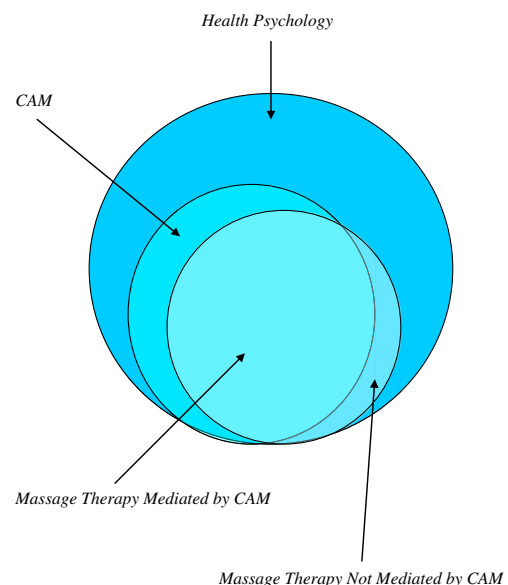


Figure 2 Conceptual Model of Health Psychology As a Context for Massage Therapy—Possibly Mediated by CAM (Venn Diagram Version). *NB:* The macro-, meso-, and micro-levels displayed earlier in Figure 1 are implied here, but in terms of a more visual display of CAM always being subsumed under health psychology. Although massage therapy is more often than not subsumed under CAM, it is always a subset of health psychology even when not mediated by CAM.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/2619217>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/2619217>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)