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**RESEARCH REPORT** 

## Effect of a general osteopathic treatment on body satisfaction, global self perception and anxiety: A randomized trial in asymptomatic female students



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## **KEYWORDS**

Osteopathy; Self perception; Anxiety; Body representation; Manual therapy Abstract Objective: The objective of this study is to assess the effect of a single session of a general osteopathic treatment (OG) on several psychological features. *Methods:* Thirty-four asymptomatic female volunteers (age) completed baseline auto-questionnaires about anxiety, body satisfaction and global self-perception. Then, they were randomly assigned to OG or to control group (restful state). Each intervention was performed during 30 min. After the session, psychological data were collected using the same auto-questionnaires. To test the effect of treatment we used ANOVA for repeated measures and compared changes over time between OG and control groups.

*Results*: At baseline, characteristics were comparable between groups. Following the intervention, we observed improvements in psychological state in both OG and control groups. Nevertheless, OG had a significant larger effect over restful state for anxiety and global self-perception (p < 0.02).

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*Conclusions:* The present study suggests that an osteopathic approach using articular and soft tissue mobilisations has an effect, at least in the short term, on anxiety and global body perception. Further investigation is needed to confirm the relevance and broaden the scope of the present study. © 2013 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Implications for clinical practice

- This study shows the effects of osteopathic manual therapy (OMT) on different psychological features in asymptomatic subjects.
- Consideration should be given to non-specific effects of osteopathic manual practice.
- A potential benefit of OMT for patients with non-musculoskeletal disorders could be investigated.
- The potential impact of OMT on psychological features, such as anxiety, in patients with musculoskeletal disorders opens interesting perspectives.

## Introduction

In the health care system, osteopathy is mostly reported for musculoskeletal conditions.<sup>1</sup> Considering the scientific literature, osteopathic interventions are commonly described as types of manipulative techniques either in asymptomatic subjects or in patients.<sup>2–5</sup> Most studies have focussed on biomechanical, neurophysiologic and clinical features following various osteopathic manipulative approaches.<sup>3,6–8</sup> However, in osteopathic practice numerous other manual techniques are described and commonly used by practitioners such as muscle energy techniques, functional and myofascial methods or the general approach.<sup>9,10</sup> The latter is described as general osteopathic treatment (GOT) that consists of using several types of body segment mobilizations for assessing the occurrence of musculoskeletal dysfunctions. Also, minor dysfunctions can be treated during this approach before completing specific adjustments.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, procedures using manual skills such as those included in GOT are often studied in terms of the mechanical or physiological effects occurring during or after its application<sup>12-14</sup> however, psychological features are often lacking.

Relevance of psychological assessment is recurrently mentioned for clinical assessment of patients suffering from chronic back pain.<sup>15–20</sup> In this respect, several studies have focussed on effectiveness of manual treatment methods on pain, depression or anxiety.<sup>21–25</sup> More recently, a few reports have emphasized the effects of osteopathic techniques on psychological features for chronic pain patients.<sup>26</sup>

As during any manual practice, osteopathic skill uses palpation as a tool either for assessing or for treating patients with musculoskeletal disorders or somatic dysfunctions.<sup>27</sup> By touching a patient physically, the practitioner induces interaction of sensory inputs such as emotions and physical sensations.<sup>12,28</sup> This interpersonal touch communication is likely to modify the subject's stress and well-being by affecting body image and body perception.<sup>21,23,25</sup> Body image may be defined as a living synthesis constructed from affective experiences related to social environment and physical inputs.<sup>29</sup> Body representation and perception may also be expressed through the relationship between somatic and psychological features.<sup>30</sup> The latter are continually influenced by individual experiences, internal and external environments such as kinaesthetic inputs.<sup>31,32</sup> In contrast, several authors actually consider body image as a multidimensional concept including several interacting psychological factors.<sup>33</sup> In this respect, positive body image may be related to body satisfaction through various characteristics such as physical attractiveness, guietness, and pleasantness that is likely to influence the awareness of one's self by a general self-perception in terms of good feeling, happiness, freedom, strength etc.

Also, the perception of pain seems to be related to body image distortions in chronic pain patients.<sup>31</sup> Sensory organisations, such as the ones occurring during body segment location or movement, are physically and mentally dependent on Download English Version:

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