

OMMEDICINE *Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine and The Power of the Healing Touch*

by Tamara McReynolds

Everyday, medical science unveils new discoveries, from brain scans to anti-cancer drugs, but anyone who's spent any time in the "mainstream" American healthcare system knows that what's missing is the one thing that most patients really need – a healing touch. What if there was a form of medicine that trained practitioners to do everything from surgery to cranial manipulation. What if there was someone who could write prescriptions and order all of the state-of-the-art diagnostic tests, but who had also been trained to feel the body's "living anatomy" – the flow of fluids, the motion and texture of tissues, and the body's structural makeup?

D.O.'s (Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine) do all this and more. An osteopathic physician receives the same medical education as an M.D., and provides a full range of services, from prescribing medications to performing surgery. In addition, D.O.'s receive special training in Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine (OMM) and take a "whole person" approach. OMM takes advantage of the body's natural tendency to move towards health and balance. Long before it was fashionable, D.O.'s advised their patients that the best "drugs" are contained in the body's immune system. D.O.'s believe in the body's innate healing ability. Using OMM, they can address trauma, chronic illness, and acute health problems in a holistic, non-invasive way.

What is OMT?

OMT (Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment) is the hands-on method used to diagnose illness and injury and encourage the body's natural tendency toward good health. Using a holistic approach, OMT works on many systems of the body, including the musculoskeletal, neurologic, lymphatic and vascular systems.

Pain, disease, and body dysfunction can have many causes. Birth trauma, childhood and adult injuries, car accidents, poor posture, and lack of exercise can create physical stress and psychological trauma that result in tight tissues (muscles, ligaments, fascia) and blockages in the blood, lymph and nervous system. OMT has the ability to remove those tissue restrictions, stimulate pain relief and improve function; removing the restrictions stimulates nerves, promotes circulation of oxygen, nutrients, and lymphatics, which help fight infection – all promote the body's innate ability to heal itself.

OMT is an umbrella term used to describe a wide variety of hands-on osteopathic techniques, including myofascial release, counter-strain, high velocity thrust, biodynamic osteopathy, visceral, lymphatic, and facilitated positional release. Cranial Osteopathy is a subtle and refined method used to free up restrictions in the movement of the bones in the head, sacrum and other parts of the body, balancing the subtle natural rhythms of the central nervous system, which regulates all of your organs.

Who Can Benefit from OMT?

OMT can be very effective in treating people of all ages and backgrounds, especially those with musculoskeletal pain, spinal and joint difficulties, arthritis, digestive disorders, asthma, menstrual problems, and chronic pain and illness. It can complement – and even replace – medication or surgery. This is especially important for pregnant women with back pain and sinus pain (who can't take many medications) and infants, who are especially responsive to Cranial Osteopathy for colic, reflux and ear infections.

Pain Relief

Neck, back, and shoulder pain
Headaches and migraines
Sciatica, joint pain, fibromyalgia
Sports and accident-related injuries

Illnesses

Asthma
Allergies
Sinus problems

Pregnancy

Back and groin pain
Swelling
Headaches

Infants and Children

Colic, spitting up
Asthma, recurrent ear infections
ADD

D.O.'s Today

D.O.'s are fully licensed physicians like M.D.'s who receive extra training in the musculoskeletal system, the use of OMT, and the osteopathic philosophies of holistic and preventive care. D.O.'s specialize in all areas of medicine: family practice, surgery, pediatrics, orthopedics, obstetrics, psychiatry, etc. They can prescribe medication and many choose to treat solely with medication and surgery, while others incorporate OMT with their practice. A small percentage of D.O.'s choose to specialize in Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine and may become board certified in Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine/Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine (C-NMM/OMM).

How Do I Find a D.O. who practices Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine?

The American Osteopathic Association (www.osteopathic.org) lists all D.O.'s and their specialties. Specialists in Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine can be found through *American Academy of Osteopathy* (www.academyofosteopathy.org) and *The Cranial Academy* (www.cranialacademy.com).

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