What makes an osteopathic treatment “effective” in patients’ perspective: a descriptive phenomenological study.

Consorti G, Marchetti A, De Marinis MG
INTRODUCTION

EFFECTIVENESS

Reduction of pain

Improvement of systemic and bodily functions

Improvement of biomechanical parameters

INTRODUCTION

To describe patients’ perspectives on their experience in osteopathic treatment, to contribute towards developing interpretative models on effectiveness.
METHODS

Data Gathering

• A descriptive phenomenological approach was used
  • The data were collected through a semi-structured interview and it was conducted in a dedicated room within the osteopathic clinic of the Centre pour l’Etude la Recherche et la Diffusion Osteopathiques (CERDO), Rome, Italy.
  • The data gathering was carried out from January to February 2018
  • The data analysis was carried out in an inductive way following the procedure outlined by Giorgi and it was parallel to the recruitment to continuously monitor the data saturation

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semi-structured interview questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opening question</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. With respect to your experience, what do you think when you hear about osteopathic care?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. On what basis do you determine whether the osteopathic treatment you received was effective or not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you think the patient has a role with respect to the outcomes of osteopathic treatment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. If so, what is the patient’s role?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What advice would you give to another patient who was about to undergo osteopathic treatment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closing question</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Would you like to say anything else in addition?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Study Group

To capture the variability of the phenomenon, a purposive sample of participants was selected. The number of participants (n = 12) was a consequence of the saturation of data and it is within the recommended number of participants for phenomenological studies (5-25 participants).

<table>
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<tr>
<td>• ≥ 18 y/o</td>
<td>• Health professionals</td>
</tr>
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<td>• Cognitive deficits</td>
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• The study was conducted in accordance with the principles of the Helsinki Declaration.

• Participants gave their consent to participate in the study by signing a written informed consent form.

• Ethical approval was granted by the Institutional Review Board of the Center for Osteopathic Medicine (COME) Collaboration (registration number: 01/2018 COME Collaboration IRB).

• Respect for study participants, beneficence, non-malice and justice were verified in compliance with the Belmont Report.


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## Participants’ characteristics

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Reason for Consultation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Migraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Hip pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Sciatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Albanian</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Shoulder pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Neck pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>University degree</td>
<td>Ankle pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Sport related issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>University degree</td>
<td>Low back pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P9</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Multifocal pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P10</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Low back pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P11</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Neck pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P12</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>High school</td>
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</table>
**Overarching theme** | Osteopathy is a path of awareness
---|---
**Themes** | 1. The experience of pain produces awareness of the need for care
**Categories** | 1. Needs
 | 2. Pain
 | 3. Beliefs
 | 4. Treatment
2. Osteopathy is a journey to be shared over time
 | 1. Path
 | 2. Time
 | 3. Trust
 | 4. Relationship with self and others
3. The effectiveness of the osteopathic treatment is the discovery of the person’s unity by experience
 | 1. Discovery
 | 2. Sensations
 | 3. Emotions
 | 4. Experience
Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment Effectiveness

Pain
The experience of pain produces awareness of the need for care

Relationship
Osteopathy is a journey to be shared over time

Person’s unity
The effectiveness of the osteopathic treatment is the discovery of the person’s unity by experience

Osteopathy is a path of awareness
• It is not possible to determine to what extent the findings are generalizable to patients in other geographical areas.

• Although the patients were followed by different osteopaths, all of them were treated in the same clinic. That makes the results potentially not transferable to patients treated in other clinical settings.

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CONCLUSIONS

• Results highlighted the need to enhance the relationship conveyed through the therapeutic touch, to enable the osteopathic treatment to be a truly shared practice.

• The results could help osteopathic professionals to recognize the importance that patients’ body awareness has for the perceived effectiveness of the osteopathic treatment.

• On this base we suggest that body awareness as perceived by patients could have a major role in determining the effectiveness on an osteopathic treatment also in future quantitative researches. The results of the present study might lead to identify new PROM for future osteopathic research (e.g. Body Perception Questionnaire – BPQ).
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