Verbal and non verbal communication in the relationship Osteopath-Patient: the role of touch.

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✓ **VERBAL**: can be "typewritten" (incidence of 7% on the entire communication process);

✓ **PARAVERBAL**: this is what can be produced and/or changed with the vocal apparatus, i.e. the tone, timbre, rhythm and the voice volume (percentage of 38% of the entire communication process)

✓ **NON VERBAL**: produced and/or varied with body movements and touch (incidence of 55% on the entire communication process).

NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION: the process through sending and receiving wordless cues between people.
Non Verbal Communication

✓ **VOICE:** paralanguage (volume, tone, rhythm, pauses, silence)
✓ **DISTANCE:** proxemics
✓ **TOUCH:** haptics
✓ **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT/APPEARANCE**
Proxemics

✓ Study of the relationship of the body with the space it occupies and the body of the others

✓ Very important is the definition of proximity or distance of the people

Proxemics

- **INTIMATE DISTANCE** (0-45 cm): intimate & confidential
- **PERSONAL DISTANCE** (45-120 cm): personal space, invading may create hardships
- **SOCIAL DISTANCE** (120-370 cm): formal or business relationships
- **PUBLIC DISTANCE** (370 cm to...)

Haptics

✓ THE WAY BY WHICH PEOPLE AND ANIMALS COMMUNICATE VIA TOUCHING

✓ TOUCH: the most effective means to communicate feelings and emotion
Touch in animals

✓ **GENTLING**: stroking and touching of newborn animals

✓ **LICKING**: to clean the offspring. Plays an important role in stimulating physiological functions of newborn animals contributing to their survivals

Tactile communication in the early stages of life may establish the foundation of all other forms of communication that humans later develop.

Categories of touch

FRIENDSHIP WARMTH TOUCH: probably the most difficult to interpret, both for the receiver and the outsider

- Boys distance themselves from parents at an earlier stage than girls.
- There is more touching with the same sex parent than with cross-sex parent

Categories of touch

✓ **PROFESSIONAL-FUNCTIONAL TOUCH:**
a hand on the shoulder for one person may mean a supportive gesture, while it could mean a sexual advance to another person.
Examples
SOCIAL-POLITE TOUCH: to communicate a limited form of interpersonal involvement
Categories of touch

✓ **LOVE-INTIMACY TOUCH:** to communicate a particularly close and involved association between individuals
Categories of touch

✓ **SEXUAL-AROUSAL TOUCH**: the most intensive, and may be the most communicative
Osteopathic Touch

✓ Touch supports verbal and tactile interaction that is both DIAGNOSTIC & THERAPEUTIC
✓ Touch links sensation to perception and bridge the gap between ourselves and the others
✓ A tactile conversation

The “core of osteopathy”

- Based on palpation.
- We touch to evaluate, communicate and treat the patient...
For osteopaths touch is an expression of compassion, skill and expertise


On the other hand touch is the mechanism for translating peripheral stimuli into subjective experiences and behaviors, organizing consciousness-intentional movements


The patient is touched by the osteopath... But the osteopath is touched by the patient

An interaction of dynamics, complex systems known as the osteopath-patient relationship

✓ A sense of being assessed and examined and treated
✓ The patient is deeply touched by hands, as well as by words
✓ The process of touching and talking facilitates an integration of mind and body
Touch for the patient

✔ The process: physical, bidirectional, supportive interaction

✔ Professionalism: patient’s expectations, care, support and boundaries

✔ Reassurance: reassuring role of touch concerning osteopath’s knowledge, competence & confidence

Touch and Feelings

Touch can communicate emotions and people touched can decode them

Patient and osteopath function as a united partnership, greater of the simple sum of the 2 partners
The osteopath and the patient are not only present to each other as roles but also as unique persons.

The role of Touch

✓ Promoting physical comfort
✓ Promoting emotional comfort
✓ Promoting mind-body comfort
✓ Sharing spirituality

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The sense of touch plays a fundamental role in nurture and attachment during development and social interaction.

Walker & McGlone 2013 for review
CT fibres

McGlone et al, Neuron 2014
CT properties

McGlone et al, Neuron 2014
Two thalamic nuclei together represent all homeostatic afferent inflow (both sympathetic and parasympathetic) from the body.

Craig A.D. How do you feel? Interoception: the sense of the physiological condition of the body. Nature Reviews Neuroscience 3, 655-666 (2002);
The underlying anatomical pathway involves:

1. the contralateral anterior insula, which must contain an initial re-representation of interoceptive cortex on the same side,

2. by way of a callosal pathway, a lateralized, second-order re-representation on the right side that is subsequently forwarded to orbitofrontal cortex.

Craig A.D. How do you feel? Interoception: the sense of the physiological condition of the body. Nature Reviews Neuroscience 3, 655-666 (2002);
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Ultimate goal: homeostasis

It's the fixity of the milieu interieur which is the condition of free and independent life and that all the vital mechanisms. However varied they may be, have only one object, that of preserving constant the conditions of life in the internal environment. (Bernard C. 1878)

Quoted from Canon WB. The wisdom of the body, 2nd revised and enlarged edition. New York: Norton. 1939

is the property of a system in which variables are regulated so that internal conditions remain stable and relatively constant: pH, temperature, sugar level, PO2 and selected ions.

(from Greek: ὁμοιος homoeos, "similar" and στάσις stasis, "standing still")

Sensitization and Interoception as Key Neurological Concepts in Osteopathy and Other Manual Medicines

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Interoceptive paradigm
Thank you!

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