

Patients' perceptions of Osteopathic education



Introduction

- How patients perceive the level of qualification needed for UK registration may sway their choice of osteopathy as treatment and of individual practitioners.
- In 2008, the British College of Osteopathic Medicine conducted a national survey of patients' **osteopathic experiences** (POStE) through media channels which also included patients' knowledge of educational requirements for osteopaths.
- Ethics approval given by BCOM ethics Committee.

Aims

- To produce an account of patients' experiences and perceptions of osteopathy.
- Results will inform osteopaths to aid understanding of the expectations of their patients;
- provide future patients with information;
- inform osteopathic training;
- identify future research possibilities.

Methods

Advertising

- October 2008 national adverts were placed in UK national newspapers asking people who had experienced osteopathic treatment to complete a questionnaire on-line or to complete a paper questionnaire by post.
- An email was sent to all osteopaths on the UK register and the Osteopathic Education Institutions seeking their support and requesting that a poster and information sheets be placed in their clinic waiting room.

Methods cont.

- 40,000 emails were purchased from Whichlist.com and broadcast by Pure360.com.
- Multiple header lines were used such as Osteopathy – have your say; Osteopathy – what is your view.
- A multiple line optimizer identified which email header was most effective.
- Online advertising.
- Advertising by posters in GP surgeries.

Methods cont.

Questionnaire

- Piloted in BCOM clinic
- On-line questionnaire created using Vista Vanguard software.
- Questions addressed above mentioned aims - patients invited to detail their worst and best experience of osteopathy - along with general demographic questions and knowledge of osteopathic education.
- The questionnaire could be submitted without completing all fields.

Methods cont.

- Secure login used to view on-line data. Patients thus able to revisit the questionnaire to complete on different occasions.
- Deadline for completion of questionnaire on-line was April'09.
- As an incentive to participate names entered into a prize draw - £500 first prize, £300 second prize, three prizes of £100.
- Chances of response to postal questionnaires already shown to double when cash incentive used and more so when incentives not conditional on responses.

Methods cont.

- **Confidentiality**
- All data treated confidentially and identity of osteopath / practice not required.
- Names / addresses needed for any prizes, known only to research team.
- Permission sought to make telephone contact if necessary to clarify questionnaire information.
- Forms identifying patients kept for two years then destroyed.

Results

- **Dissemination of results**
- www.osteopathicresearch.eu
- Summary report to General Osteopathic Council.
- Journal publication.
