

Summary and Course Materials from ICRA workshop The Evidence-base for Cranial Osteopathy

4th June 2011

Speakers:

Carol Fawkes

Brian Isbell

Colin Dove (Keynote)

Caroline Tosh

This meeting was an important milestone for cranial therapy, with speakers who are leaders in their respective areas of evidence and research; it brought together cranial practitioners from many professions including the CSTA, and including osteopaths from the ICRA, Sutherland Cranial College, the OCC, and the ESO as well as representatives from research within NCOR , CSTA and osteopath who have published in this field.

The ICRA has always tried to encourage a spirit of being open and inclusive, and to encourage sharing of knowledge and experience between professions. This meeting realised this vision.

Carol Fawkes emphasised that there is evidence of a pulsed cranial fluid circulation that effects some physiological parameters, despite the strong doubts voiced by Hartmann. The clinical evidence is weak , lacking in good randomised controlled trials, when judged against the “hierarchy of evidence” . Yet osteopathy does have much evidence in the form of documented expert clinical observation. The profession needs more data about current clinical practice, collected in a standardised way.

Brian Isbell presented two student projects attempting to evaluate outcomes of cranial treatment, as examples of the difficulties and design issues in conducting a controlled trial of cranial therapy, and the value of collecting outcomes data. The validated, patient-centred outcome measure MYMOP is routinely used at Westminster University’s polyclinic; it needs some additional fields , especially to record patients’ life events. Further outcome measures are being tested there for the future. Their experience with modified MYMOP represents a valuable resource for the profession.

Colin Dove provided a thought-provoking argument; he attacked randomised controlled trials as unscientific because the method “homogenises” patients, and fails to account for the individual response to treatment. He proposed a new theory. Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms (SNiPs) are beginning to explain patient individuality and enable treatment to be tailored in medicine. Newtonian mechanical science cannot explain the patient –practitioner interaction that occurs in cranial therapy, those meaningful images, thoughts and colours which are very much part of the subjective experience of cranial therapy. Colin studied quantum mechanics to and found quantum super radiance and the coherence of water provides a theory capable of describing cranial treatment. Read his 2004 Rollin Becker lecture for more details.

Last but not least, Caroline Tosh told us how, after much debate and exploration of different avenues, the Sutherland Cranial College is doing what each of the previous speakers had recommended as the way forward for cranial research: they are asking their members to collect data on what they do in practice. Inspired by the fact that about 25% of osteopaths reported using cranial techniques in the NCOR's SDC project, the SCC has shown what a small group of cranial practitioners can achieve, despite a small budget. They have been able to commission a leading CAM research department at Sheffield University to design the study; they will analyse the data and publishing the findings.

Useful links

MYMOP2 Validated outcome measure: <http://sites.pcmd.ac.uk/mymop/>

Recommended paper by Shannon, Weil and Kaplan : [Medical Decision Making in Integrative Medicine: Safety, Efficacy, and Patient Preference](http://www.liebertonline.com/doi/abs/10.1089/act.2011.17210)
<http://www.liebertonline.com/doi/abs/10.1089/act.2011.17210>

The following course material is available.

Powerpoint Presentations and / or text handouts from speakers

References list from Carol Fawkes

Additional material to follow

Dove C.I. Rollin Becker Lecture, 2004

Short Form of "SDC Project" as used for data collection in Sutherland project

These will be available from Dropbox links (to follow SOON)

Video recordings of the presentations

Audio recordings of the presentations

