A systematic review and critical appraisal of the scientific evidence on craniosacral therapy

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Record Status
This is a bibliographic record of a published health technology assessment. The agency responsible for the publication has subsequently been disbanded. No evaluation of the quality of this assessment has been made for the HTA database.

Citation

Authors' objectives
The objective of this report, was to gather and critically appraise the scientific basis of craniosacral therapy as a therapeutic intervention.

Authors' conclusions
This systematic review and critical appraisal did not find valid scientific evidence that craniosacral therapy provides a benefit to patients. Research methods are available which could conclusively evaluate craniosacral therapy effectiveness. They have not been used to date. The available health outcome research consists of low grade of evidence derived from weak study designs.

Studies conducted in the 1970s reporting acceptable interrater reliability scores for assessment measures used by craniosacral therapy practitioners have not been verified by more recent research using stronger study protocols. This casts doubt on the existence of the underlying phenomenon being measured, or on practitioners' ability to measure it. Adverse events have been reported in head-injured patients following craniosacral therapy.

Project page URL
http://www.chspr.ubc.ca/bcohta/

URL for DARE abstract
http://www.crd.york.ac.uk/CRDWeb/ShowRecord.asp?ID=11999009361

Indexing Status
Subject indexing assigned by CRD

MeSH
Cerebrospinal Fluid /physiology; Cerebrospinal Fluid Pressure /physiology; Palpation; Physical Therapy Modalities

Language Published
English

Country of organisation
Canada

Province or state
British Columbia

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AccessionNumber
31999008497

Date bibliographic record published
28/06/1999

Date abstract record published
28/06/1999