

Osteopathic Sports Care: state of the art

Editorial

Author: Civitillo C.^{1,2} PT, DO, EBP Core Curriculum

¹ G.I.O.S.B.E. Gruppo Italiano Osteopatia dello Sport Basata sulle Evidenze, Via Ercole D'Agnesè 62,
81016 Piedimonte Matese (Caserta) Italy

²A.E.M.O. Accademia Europea Medicina Osteopatica Dipartimento Ricerca, Via Gramsci 22, 81031
Aversa (Caserta) Italy





“Osteopathic Sports Care”

World Health Organization and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine

The Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine (OMM) is a drug-free manual form of medicine constantly increasing and getting more and more recognition in Europe¹ the World Health Organization (WHO), in a recently published document, described it as part of the Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) based on the manual contact for diagnosis and treatment². In the field of sport it is applied using its two unique features: tissue palpation check for the somatic diagnosis, and the

Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment (OMT)³ for the resolution of the Somatic Dysfunction (SD)⁴

Osteopathic practice

In clinical practice, many are the therapeutic, manual techniques used to improve the physiological function and restore the homeostasis altered by the SD. The somatic system correlated components that can be compromised by the SD include the skeletal, myofascial and artroidal structures and their related vascular, lymphatic and neural elements. The OMT always focuses on the basic functional rebalancing rather than just the mere removal of the symptoms. Therefore, the diagnosis and OMT approach never stray from the four basic principles of the osteopathic profession:

- The Body is a single unit and an individual is not just a combination of separate parts; but a person where all the parts work together;
- Structure and function are reciprocally interdependent;
- The body has self-regulating mechanisms;
- The body has the natural capacity of defending and healing itself

Origins of OMM

The OMM became known in professional sport in the USA thanks to its founder Andrew Taylor Still MD, DO (1828–1917)⁵ for the care he provided to the medical college students in Kansas together with Forrest Phog Allen DO (1855-1974)⁶. Allen, legendary basketball coach for the Kansas Jayhawks, was not just the coach, he was also the team osteopath. This role helped him make the scientific community, the athletes, the

coaches and trainers realize the impact that the OMT had in the sport field. It has recently been forecasted that by 2020 there will be about 100.000 practicing Osteopaths⁷.

The Message of Lord Sebastian Coe

A message from Lord Sebastian Coe, CH KBE, Chairman of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games says: “The Olympic and Paralympic Games in London 2012 were unique in its provision of Medical and Paramedical services provided to athletes. For the first time in Olympic history, Osteopaths were invited to be part of the Central Medical Team.

Key words:

Osteopathic manipulative medicine;
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Twenty-five highly dedicated osteopathic experts gave their time to volunteer as part of the Physical Therapies team, looking after athletes and support staff from all over the world. Osteopaths were present for the duration of both the Olympic and Paralympic Games, located in polyclinics at each major Olympic village, performing over 900 medical encounters. The incredible success of London 2012 showcased the determination, enthusiasm and commitment of all those

involved. Osteopaths were part of a team of 70,000 game makers who played an integral role to help create that legacy, which lit up the world and I thank them for their time, their professionalism and their dedication to the athletes. If this successful legacy is one we can take to Rio 2016, then it is sure to follow London's footsteps in being resoundingly successful Games⁸. Since Lord Sebastian Coe's message on the success of the London Olympic Games in 2012, the integration process of the osteopaths into the medical team has continued with the Osteopathic Committee for the Rio16 Olympic Games⁹ (COJO-Comitê Osteopático para os Jogos Olímpicos do Rio 16). Since the beginning of 2013, the COJO has had meetings with those in charge of the health services for the Rio Olympic Games 2016 with the objective of showing how the OMM is correctly and independently practiced in an international context, as indicated by the OMS and also to show how positive the participation of the osteopaths to the London Games was; working together with the doctors, physiotherapists masseurs, chiropractors and trainers¹⁰.



Medical services volunteers will work at competition venues and the athletes' village (Photo: Rio 2016/Alexandre Loureiro)

Research and Osteopathic Sports Care

Therefore, the osteopathic profession, according to what the OMM document states, must guarantee that the treatment/diagnosis methods and more specifically the OMM ones are scientifically evident in any kind of clinical practice, like in the Osteopathic Sports Care. This must happen with a true knowledge of the Evidence Based Medicine (EBM) current concepts. Since the OMM focuses on the single patient's care (person-centered care), it must be open to create a wider discussion on what scientifically evident means. For example, although many evidence studies have been produced by osteopathy accademic centers, the OMM can be victim of the EBM strict definition of "good trial" just due to the nature of the trial supposedly extended to large populations. **In conclusion**, a reevaluation of the definition "scientifically evident" for the osteopathic profession should encourage an open discussion intended at finding a combination of the evidence guided medicine and the person-centered care, without overlooking the principles of the osteopathic profession

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Corresponding author e-mail: segreteria.giosbe@gmail.com