

Comparison of Osteopathic and Chinese Massage

In History development and Techniques

Haiqing Jiang

Osteopathic medicine and Chinese massage are different treatment systems in the world. It has different history and techniques. I would like to compare of them in history development, techniques base on my experiences and knowledge.

History development of Osteopathic

Osteopathic is a distinctive form of medical care founded on the philosophy that all body systems are interrelated and dependent upon one another for good health. This philosophy was developed in 1874 by Dr. Andrew Taylor Still, who pioneered the concept of "wellness" and recognized the importance of treating illness within the context of the whole body.

His research and clinical observations led him to believe that the musculoskeletal system played a vital role in health and disease and that the body contained all of the elements needed to maintain health, if properly stimulated. Still believed that by correcting problems in the body's structure, through the use of manual techniques now known as osteopathic manipulative treatment, the body's ability to function and to heal itself could be greatly improved.

These beliefs formed the basis of a new medical approach, osteopathic medicine. Based on this philosophy, Dr. Still opened the first school of osteopathic medicine in 1892. As osteopathy grew, political and legislative battles were fought and won.

Osteopathic manipulation could relieve the restrictions to the free flow of blood and nerve power by removing the bony dislocations and muscle contractions. Still, an amateur inventor, was fascinated with machines and had a near-perfect knowledge of human anatomy from his many years of self study.

Osteopathy is a naturalistic, vitalistic, holistic and drugless approach to health and disease. Osteopathy maintains that there is a reciprocal relationship between structure and function. Namely, that an alteration in structure (the

musculoskeletal system) through injury will result in a change in function (an internal organ) and hence disease.

Interest in natural methods such as homeopathy, acupuncture, and herbal medicine is enjoying a universal renewal and Osteopathy stands in the center of this renaissance. Although the concept of a vital energy or life-force has existed for thousands of years in various cultures, in modern Western culture Osteopathy represents the foundation of many “body work” therapies such as Rolfing, Chiropractic, and Naturopathic manipulation.

As the osteopathic curriculum improved over the years it became more like conventional medicine. Even during Still’s lifetime the early osteopathic colleges began teaching drug therapy. The original osteopathic concept is powerful and has made a lasting impression on medicine throughout the world. Osteopathic and conventional basic science research has validated and confirmed many of Still’s original ideas.

Today there are 26 osteopathic colleges and more than 50,000 DOs practicing in the United States. Osteopathic physicians can practice in all medical and surgical specialties through osteopathic or allopathic board certification.

History development of Chinese Massage

The earliest written records of massage therapy were discovered in China. Texts documenting the medical benefits of massage therapy date back to approximately 2700 BC. The traditional Chinese massage therapy was developed from the combined expertise and methods of doctors in traditional Chinese medicine.

Chinese massage methods originated from the principle that diseases and illnesses arise due to a deficiency or imbalance in the energy in specific pathways or meridians that represent physiological systems. Through massage and other specific bodywork techniques, energy will flow more harmoniously through these pathways, allowing the body to heal itself naturally.

Chinese massage rectifies anatomical anomalies, alters the inner energy state of the biological system and adjusts the body. For soft tissue injuries, Chinese massage relaxes muscles and tendons and promotes smooth passage of the channels. It also promotes blood circulation and removes blood stasis.

Chinese massage may be applied to treat many disorders from soft tissue injuries to many other kinds of ailments such as rheumatic pain, tiredness, lack of energy and any symptoms caused by stress or emotional problems. Chinese massage is especially good for adults, infants, sports medicine, general health care for the elderly, rehabilitation and orthopaedics, from which many other complementary therapies have evolved as 'specialist' therapies.

Chinese massage was successful, it spread around the globe. It is the basis upon which many modern complementary therapies are based, such as Shiatsu, Acupressure, Baby Massage, Deep Tissue Massage, Sports Massage, Lymphatic Draining to name but a few.

Osteopathic Manipulation Techniques

The spectrum of osteopathic manipulation techniques focused on the principle that the body structure and function are dependent on one another. When structure is altered via the musculoskeletal system abnormalities occur in other body systems. It can produce restrictions of motion, tenderness, tissue changes and asymmetry. Following are some of the manipulation procedures most commonly used by osteopathic physicians to diagnose and treat somatic dysfunctions:

Hands-on Contact – The value of the placing of hands on a patient is universally acknowledged by health professionals. This essential component of the doctor-patient relationship has a great deal to do with the patient's well being, whether he or she suffers from a cold or a terminal disease. When the osteopath practitioner examines a patient by auscultation of the chest or palpation of the abdomen or spine, the treatment has already begun.

Soft-Tissue Technique – This technique is commonly applied to the musculature surrounding the spine and consists of a rhythmic stretching, deep pressure and traction. Its purpose is to move tissue fluids (edema) and to relax hypertonic muscles and myofascial (fibrous tissue) layers associated with somatic dysfunction.

Myofascial Release – This procedure is designed to treat primarily the myofascial structures. In the use of direct myofascial release treatment (MRT) a restrictive barrier is engaged for the myofascial tissues; the tissue is loaded with a constant force until release occurs. In treating with indirect MRT the dysfunctional tissues are guided along a path of least resistance until free movement is achieved.

Lymphatic Technique – This manual procedure is designed to promote circulation of the lymphatic fluids and can be used to relieve upper and lower respiratory infections. One technique is pressure applied with the physician's hands to the

prone patient's upper anterior chest wall. When force applied to the chest reaches its maximum on expiration, the physician's hands are removed suddenly. This increases negative pressure of the chest to assist the body's respiratory mechanism to move lymphatic fluids.

Thrust Technique – In this form of manipulation, the physician applies a high velocity/low-amplitude thrust to restore specific joint motion. With such a technique, the joint regains its normal range of motion and re-sets neural reflexes. The procedure reduces and/or completely nullifies the physical signs of somatic dysfunction; tissue changes, asymmetry, restriction of motion and tenderness.

Muscle Energy Technique – In this manual technique the patient is directed to use his or her muscles from a precise position and in a specific direction against a counterforce applied by the physician. The purpose is to restore motion, decrease muscle/tissue changes and modify asymmetry of somatic dysfunction.

Counterstrain – The counterstrain technique is a manual procedure in which the patient is moved passively away from the restricted motion barrier, towards the position of greatest comfort. At this point, passive, asymptomatic strain is induced. This technique is used for relief of somatic dysfunctions that are too acute or too delicate to treat with other procedures.

Chinese Massage Techniques

Chinese massage uses techniques and manipulations to stimulate acupuncture points or other parts of the body so as to correct physiological imbalances of the body and achieve curative effects. The effect of Chinese massage is to disperse and smooth obstructions whilst checking and restraining hyperfunction. Chinese massage is an important part of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), which also encompasses acupuncture, herbal medicine, nutrition and exercise to treat the whole body, mind and spirit.

Chinese massage techniques and manipulations are rigorous. Patients of Chinese massage treatments can be seated or may be laid on a treatment couch, whichever is the most comfortable position for both patient and practitioner. Chinese massage treatments are usually applied on top of loose clothing.

Chinese massage practitioner use the arms, hands, fingers, elbows and knees as tools for treating diseases and illnesses. It is also used to protect health and build up body immunity, so that disease can be stopped in its beginning acting as a preventative medical measure, without any side effects.

Chinese massage technique also includes joint manipulations, such as traction, circumduction, stretching, and "mobilization " (a.k.a. "cracking" or, in Chinese, "Ban fa"). "Ban fa" literally means a trigger, wrench or lever. It refers to sudden mobilization ("wrenching") of the vertebrae or other joints following relaxation of the surrounding soft tissue with gliding, kneading, etc. It is traditionally performed with the patient in a side-lying position, seated position or even borne on the back of the practitioner (back-to-back, with elbows interlocked). When done with the hands, the practitioner often uses palpation skills to direct the impulse to a specific vertebra.

One of the trademarks of Chinese massage is the extensive use of compression, particularly of acupuncture points.

In the modern era, the practice of massage has evolved into a rich repertoire of techniques, many of which are also found in the classic Western massage. These include effleurage (gliding), petrissage (kneading), vibration, shaking, rocking, tapotement (percussion), friction and others.

Conclusion

Osteopathic and Chinese massage are different treatment system in medical fields. Osteopathic was developed in 1874 by Dr. Andrew Taylor Still in US and popular in northern America and Europe. Chinese massage developed in ancient China . It developed step by step over 2500 years base on traditional Chinese medicine theory and acupuncture.

All of them treatment are focus on musculoskeletal system, but the diseases not only limited these system. Some of them techniques are similar, especial the mobilization techniques. Only different is Chinese massage will use more force in the end of manipulation and osteopathic less.

They are all provided unique and effective treatment for human being. It will be developed and continue to service for health in the future.