

## Cranial Osteopathy for Infants

In this study of 42 infants of less than one year of age, their mothers indicated that on average 86% of their infant's problems had been helped, at least to some extent, and that 53% had had their symptoms relieved by at least 50% in an average of 2.4 treatments, making this approach very cost (and time) effective.

In this study, covering a 17 month period from 1st May 1997 to 30th September 1998, 42 infants of less than 1 year of age were treated for common infantile disorders. The audit tested the effectiveness of Cranial Osteopathy through feedback on a visual analogue scale from the infants' mothers.

Their mothers were asked to be as clear and objective in answering a follow up questionnaire as possible, and if Cranial Osteopathy had not helped their child to let us know, so that we could all learn for the future.

On this scale, the mothers indicated that, on average, 86% of their infants' problems had been helped, at least to some extent, and 53% had had their symptoms relieved by at least 50%. The average number of treatments required was 2.4, making this approach very cost (and time) effective.

Most infants presented with more than one common infantile disorder, the average being 2.3 disorders per child. These fell into seven main categories:

Disorder	Number of Cases
Sleep Disorders	19 Infants
Constant Crying	16 Infants
Irritability	11 Infants
Reflux	13 Infants
Wind	10 Infants
Feeding Difficulty	9 Infants
Colic	8 Infants
Other (various)	8 Infants
	<b>95 Infantile Disorders</b>

*The Other (various) category included poor bowel habits (2), Head held to one side (2), Flattened occiput (back of head) (1), protruding cranial sutures (1), glue ear (1) and blocked tear duct (1).*

## Results

The major question that tested the effectiveness of Cranial Osteopathy in the questionnaire asked the mothers to indicate the degree to which they felt that Cranial Osteopathy had helped each of their child's problems that they had identified earlier. A visual analogue scale was used for this question and is repeated below:

<b>Table 1</b>										
<b>0-10 Visual Analogue Scale</b>										
No help			Helped a bit			Helped a lot			Symptom free	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Explanatory notes indicated that if the treatment had completely fixed an infant's sleep disorder, for example, then the mother might write 10 next to sleep disorders, but if it had only helped their reflux a bit, they might write 2 or 3 next to reflux. This allowed the results for each disorder to be assessed separately.

On average, 53% of the common infantile disorders were helped by 50% or more (i.e.; "helped a lot"), 14% being symptom free as a result of cranial treatment, while 86% were helped at least to some extent by the treatment. The average number of treatments per infant was 2.4.

Table 2 sets out the results.

<b>Table 2</b>					
<b>Results of Cranial Treatment</b>					
<b>Common Infantile Disorders</b>	<b>Number of cases</b>	<b>% Symptom free</b>	<b>% at least 50% solved</b>	<b>% helped to some extent</b>	<b>Average number of treatments</b>
<b>Wind</b>	10	10%	70%	90%	2.6
<b>Sleep Disorders</b>	19	16%	52%	90%	2.5
<b>Colic</b>	9	11%	55%	89%	2.9
<b>Constant crying</b>	16	12%	56%	88%	2.6
<b>Irritability</b>	11	18%	54%	82%	2.6
<b>Feeding difficulty</b>	9	22%	55%	78%	2.0
<b>Reflux</b>	13	15%	31%	69%	2.0
<b>Other (various)</b>	8	12%	50%	88%	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>2.4</b>

Another question in the questionnaire asked the mothers to use a 0-10 scale where 0="awful", and 10="excellent", to rate:

- a) The Cranial Osteopath's manner in handling both mother and child.
- b) The explanation and information on Cranial Osteopathy made available at the consultation.

**All mothers** answered both questions with scores of 6 or more (better than average), 71% rating the Cranial Osteopath's manner of handling excellent (10/10), and 60% rating the explanation and information made available at the consultation as excellent (10/10).

All the mothers responded "Yes" to a question asking if they were pleased they had taken their child to the Cranial Osteopath (whether the treatment had helped or not).

41 of the 42 mothers responded "Yes" to a question asking if they would recommend Cranial Osteopathy to their friends or family if their babies had similar problems.

When asked if Cranial Osteopathy had made their child's problems worse in the long term, only one mother reported that her child's reflux symptoms had worsened, but she added that she did not think this was a result of their treatment.

## Conclusion

Cranial Osteopathy is a very gentle technique that aims to relieve any strains or compressions found in the tissues of the cranium, spine, pelvis and the rest of the body. Numerous infant and childhood dysfunctions appear to be able to be helped by this approach, including learning disorders, recurrent ear and chest infections, colic, reflux and sleep disorders.

All the infants participating in this clinical audit were treated with a combination of Cranial Osteopathy and myofascial release techniques to the head, spine, ribcage and pelvis. No manipulative techniques were used.

## References

1) "Osteopathic treatment results for acute and chronic injuries", by C. Rowse D.O. and R. Carruthers D.O., J.N.Z.R.O. 1987.

2). Ibid.

3). "Results of Osteopathic treatment according to site of pain", by R. Carruthers D.O., J.N.Z.R.O., 1988

4). "A follow-up study of chronic ACC patients", by R. Carruthers D.O., J.N.Z.R.O., 1988.