

Osteopathic Medicine For Older People

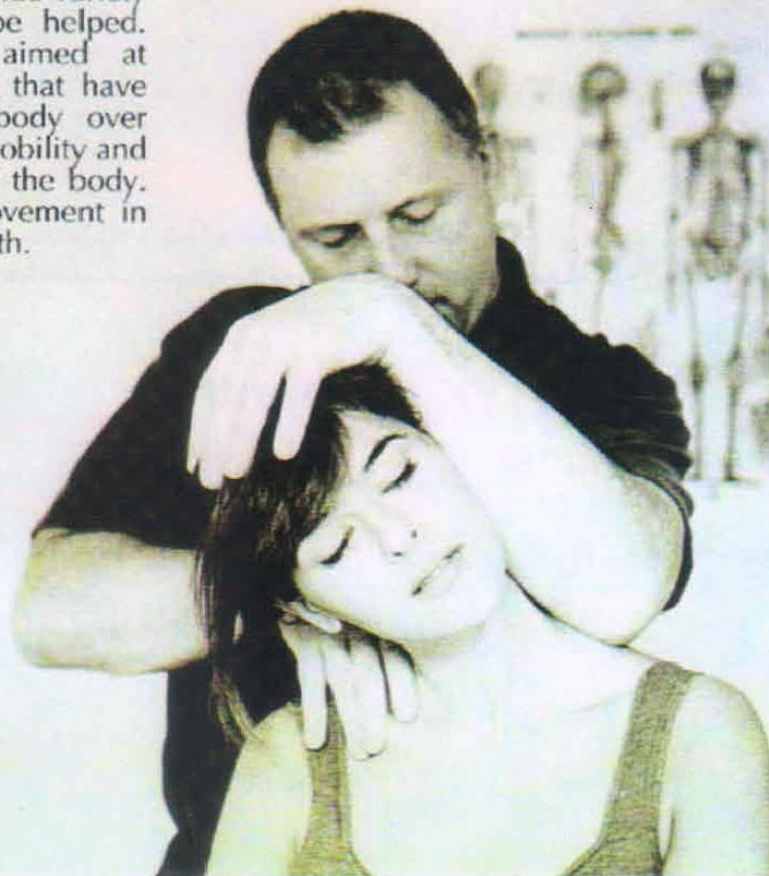
Advancing years are often associated with the insidious onset of health problems. However, suffering pain, stiffness and poor health is NOT an inevitable part of getting older.

What do osteopathic Physicians?

The body can be likened to a car, in that it needs regular servicing and maintenance as it gets older! Osteopaths treat the whole person not just conditions, and thus a very wide variety of different problems can be helped. Osteopathic treatment is aimed at releasing strains and stresses that have often accumulated in the body over many years, thus improving mobility and the circulation to all parts of the body. The result is often an improvement in many different aspects of health.

How many treatments are needed?

Sometimes only a few treatments are needed, other people may take benefit from regular treatment, or an occasional "service" every few months to keep everything working. Patients are frequently extremely happy at being able to resume a more active lifestyle.



Common Problems

Accidents, strains and other trauma

Most people will have suffered trauma at some point in their life, such as from falls, car accidents, or sporting accidents. Often people do not think that they have injured themselves at the time, but to the trained hands of an osteopath the effects of these accidents are often palpable years later as a continuing strain within the body tissues. This can make the joints more vulnerable to arthritic changes, and cause undue fatigue because more energy is used in simple every day tasks. Falls are more likely as we get older. With increasing age, the body tissues lose some of their flexibility and elasticity and do not recover as quickly from trauma. This imparts lasting strains in the body, which can not only aggravate existing problems, but also predispose to other illnesses.

Treatment :

Osteopathic treatment can be effective at releasing the residual strains from accidents, both recent and long ago. This allows the body to function more efficiently.

The result is often an improvement in areas giving pain or other symptoms.

Osteoarthritis

This is the most common symptom of getting older. It can occur in many of the joints in the body, while some joints such as the hips and knees are more vulnerable than others.

Symptoms and signs

Enlargement and persistent swelling of a joint; aching, pain and stiffness, worse on initially moving a joint after resting; increased pain and swelling if joint is overused.

Arthritis can affect any joint in the body, but the back, hips and knees are some of the most debilitating.

Treatment

Osteopathic treatment improves circulation around the joint, improves mobility and slows the rate of deterioration in the joint. Treatment to ease old strains held within the body will enable the joints to work in a more balanced fashion and with greater ease.

If replacement surgery is finally needed, the body tissues are generally in better health and the recovery is swifter. Treatment after surgery also speeds up recovery.

Rheumatoid arthritis with its hot, swollen joints, may also show some improvement with regular osteopathic treatment.

Heart and lungs

Heart disease is one of the main causes of disability in the elderly. It is often associated with breathing difficulties and lung problems.

Heart and lung problems may be aggravated by tension in the chest. The chest is one of the first areas to tighten up when we are worried or under stress. Tension causes muscles to tighten, and reduces the ability of the chest to expand fully in breathing. This can constrict the heart and lungs, and make them more vulnerable to disease.

Treatment

Gentle osteopathic treatment is used to release tension in the diaphragm between the chest and the abdomen, and in the muscles of the chest. This encourages and restores normal breathing movements and helps the heart and lungs to work to their best potential.

Effects of Surgery

Some surgery leaves behind excessive scar tissue, and this can be the cause of problems within the abdomen or pelvis. It is sometimes possible to release some of these effects with osteopathic treatment.

Dentures and plates

Dentures and plates can cause structural problems in the head and neck. Normally there is a slight movement between bones of the face and head. An upper plate or denture has the effect of holding the bones of the upper jaw rigidly together, preventing or severely limiting the natural movement between them. Strains may also be set up through the face as a result of dental extractions, ill fitting dentures, old or worn dentures (which cause a loss of height through the face), or from eating unevenly due to loss of teeth.

Symptoms

Face or neck pain, headache, congested sinuses, ear problems or eye strain.

Prevention

Plates and dentures should be removed at night to allow the face to free itself off for some hours during each 24 hour cycle.

How can osteopathic Medical treatment help?

Many of the problems mentioned above can be successfully treated or helped by osteopathic treatment. Your osteopathic Physician will have undertaken lengthy training, and is qualified to recognize and diagnose illnesses and conditions.

This is important as people visits osteopaths which are not medical doctors, are not recognized by social health insurance, nor health ministry and nor the Order of Physicians and this is very common in Lebanon, so patients, for their wellbeing, should call and verify at the LOP (Lebanese Order of Physicians) if the therapist is a certified medical doctor.

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OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

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