

Introduction to Wholistic Manual Medicine

Manual medicine is a generic term meaning the use of the hands to evaluate and treat any disease. This generic term does indeed describe what is being done, but it in no way offers any guidance as to how or why to do it.

Modern medicine traces the use of the hands in evaluation and treatment back to Hypocrites. Most, if not all, cultures utilize manual means in their healthcare delivery. John McPartland, DO, MS, and Brian Miller, PT, PCM, OCS, provide the most comprehensive history of “manual medicine” in their work titled, “Body Work and Therapy Systems,” published in “Complimentary Therapies and Physical Medicine Rehabilitation,” Vol. 10, #3, August 1999, the Physical Medicine Rehabilitation from Clinics of North America series. John emphasizes the broad nature of bodywork and the ever-increasing numbers of techniques that are being propagated, developed, and used. Each technique is accompanied by its own theory as to why it works.

There is a science to Wholistic Manual Medicine. It is based in the observation of nature and her works. Observation of living, breathing, functional anatomy. It is in part, the study of the interrelationship and interdependence of structure and function. It is in part the accumulated knowledge and study in all sciences as applied to the mind and the body. It's science is founded in the profound acknowledgment of the body's tremendous inherent knowledge and ability to survive. The acknowledgment that, whether through evolution or creation, the body has a stored knowledge and information base way beyond our ability to learn from a textbook. In other words, this science is founded on the knowledge that the physical body will continue to heal itself when allowed to do so. The science of Wholistic Manual Medicine is based on these two principles:

1. That the body has the capacity to heal itself (given half a chance!).
2. The human structure is as it is because of its functional history. We can therefore evaluate this structure with our hands to find the restrictive imprints of trauma and facilitate their release!

Anatomy is the most important science for the manual medicine practitioner. This is followed by physiology, an anatomy of molecular interactions in living organisms; chemistry, the anatomy of chemical reactions; physics, the anatomy of energy, mass, space and time. Together, these sciences create a functional anatomy with a viewpoint of this structure and its function being interdependent and interrelated. We can observe for loss of motion and facilitate the return of motions to restore health to the being.

The Art and Science of Pressure Point Release

Background Information

Pressure point release is an osteopathic technique developed similarly to other osteopathic techniques. It is a personal approach developed by the integration of multiple techniques based upon Osteopathic and other scientific principals.

Principals:

Basic to the Osteopathic principal is the interrelationship and interdependence of structure and function. That is to say that a person's structure determines his or her ability to function, and that his or her past functional history has determined the present structure. The goal of Osteopathic manual medicine is to return the individual's structure, which may have become restricted in mobility through trauma, to normal, free movement.

From physics we know that the physical organism exists in a **colloid** state. This implies that it has the capacity to behave as either a liquid or a solid depending upon its energy state. A higher energy state within a colloid produces a more solid structure and conversely a lower energy state produces a more liquid structure.

Quantum Physics describes energy states in which particles exist and which may be moved to higher energy states only by the application of an exact "quanta" of energy which will bump the particle to a new higher state. Muscle, fascia and bone can be viewed as colloid at three different Quanta or energy states.

The physics of **chaos** suggest that when an energy field is filled by a replicating pattern then there is a "perturbation" into a more complex but similar pattern at a higher energy state.

Collagen, a basic building protein of animal tissue, has **piezoelectric** qualities. This implies that trauma to such a structure will produce electrical currents. This current of injury then has the effect of hardening colloid tissue. These "hard spots" are called pressure points. Pressure points can be found in muscle, fascia, or bone.

Pressure release implies the release of abnormal tissue pressures through the intelligent application of a counter pressure, thereby allowing normal flow of fluids and tissues through the area. Muscle has the lowest capacity to store energy, is the easiest to "release", and has the least dramatic long-term response. Bone has the greatest capacity to store energy, and therefore the greatest capacity to restrict normal functional mobility after trauma. It is also the most subtle and difficult to palpate and release "hard spots".

Basic Principles of Wholistic Manual Medicine

1. The body heals itself.
 - a) It can make any substance it needs with proper nutrition, hydration and activity.
 - b) Nature is to be trusted to the nth degree.
 - c) The physician or therapist then becomes a facilitator of health, not the creator or giver of health.

2. Structure and function are inter-dependent.
 - a) Structure is an abstraction of function - the end result of an organism's functional history to this point in time is represented in its structure at this point in time.
 - b) Function is the child of structure - an organism's functional capacity is determined by its structure.
 - c) Stressing a living structure to its functional limits creates an urge and growth towards a structure that can handle those functional demands. A baseball player becomes more able to throw a ball the more he throws the ball. His skills, strength and physical structure, muscle bulk and bone density, all change towards handling the imposed functional demands of throwing a baseball. This can be applied to the individual and the species alike.

3. Unimpeded flow of all the body structures is essential to health.
 - a) The root of any disease can be traced back to an area of impeded flow of a body part or substance. This may be from the result of both physical trauma and dysfunctional motion.
 - b) Restoration of flow, complete and free movement of all the structure's parts and fluids, allows the body to heal itself.

4. The mind governs the body.
 - a) The mind is the source of intelligence and knowledge. Here we have to be careful that we are talking about the same thing. When I say Mind, I mean emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of the self. The source of intelligence and knowledge I consider to be a spiritual aspect of the mind. Spiritual aspects include knowing, being, having ancestors, genetics, endocrine function, bone, light, and the mental aspects which are involved with thinking and believing.
 - b) Energy follows thought. Your physical energies of rage, sorrow, and joy express through your beliefs, creating motion.
 - c) The living body is a physical structure with motion. It is this motion which makes it functional. It must be ordered motion to maintain life. This order comes from the mind.

Technique

There is no actual single technique in manual medicine, rather, there are countless techniques in use. Some are very popular and taught to osteopaths, allopaths, physical therapists, occupational therapists, massage therapists and lay persons alike. Some techniques are little known and have been developed by many different practitioners as they developed their own particular skills. Almost every technique can be traced back to an Osteopath for a very good reason.

As mentioned earlier, Osteopathy is the science behind manual medicine and therefore a thorough understanding of the principles is what will lead a practitioner to develop their own personal skills and therefore their own techniques. When you watch a skilled practitioner work, you will see his or her *technique* whether or not it has been named.

The hazard in learning various techniques is that one is likely to become absorbed in the step-by-step process of its application and lose sight of the principles behind it. Since every person and every problem is unique, the simple application of a technique is rarely enough to thoroughly resolve the problem.

The advantage of learning various techniques is that one can see how the principles can be applied in different ways. It can also deepen ones appreciation of the principles. The key is to always be a facilitator of the body's own inherent mechanisms and not an intruder imposing their own ideas and actions on the body.

A memorized technique is not dynamic but full knowledge of the principles will allow a dynamic approach. Since the body is constantly in dynamic states, only a dynamic approach can touch the difficulty squarely to allow its release.

Wholistic Manual Medicine Evaluation and Treatment

Medicine is the diagnosis and treatment of people. In Wholistic Manual Medicine, *evaluation and treatment* are the two ends of the same process.

As the *evaluation* moves from the **screen** of the whole being to the **scanning** of the area to the *exact* **definition** of the “lesion” (tissue texture abnormality and motion disturbance at the root of all physical disease), the lesion releases.

The definition is the exact parameters of **position, motion and tension** (or force). When these are met precisely, the abnormally stored energy releases, and the tissues return to a more normal state. If there is no release, then the exact parameters of position, motion or force were not met precisely.

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