Utilization of Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment within an Academic Practice Setting

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Introduction: Osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT) has historically been the foundation of treatment used by osteopathic physicians. This study assesses the utilization of OMT across multiple specialties in an academic practice setting.

Hypothesis: OMT is underutilized in multiple clinics within an osteopathic academic institution.

Methods: Electronic medical records for all clinics at the University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNTHSC) were retrospectively reviewed to include all patient records that were billed for use of OMT from September 2004 to September 2015. The specialty clinics were combined into the following categories: neuromusculoskeletal medicine, family medicine, sports medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics, and surgery. The research protocol was approved by the institutional review board at UNTHSC.

Results: A total of 35,333 records that included billing codes for OMT during the specified time period were reviewed. Of all encounters in which OMT was provided, 32235 (91%) were neuromusculoskeletal medicine, 1365 (3.9%) were family medicine, 1149 (3.3%) were sports medicine, 545 (1.5%) were internal medicine specialties, 15 (0.04%) were pediatrics, 13 (0.03%) were obstetrics, and 10 (.03%) were surgical specialties.

Conclusions: This review demonstrates that the vast majority of OMT encounters are provided by osteopathic neuromusculoskeletal specialists, with family medicine and sports medicine as distant runners-up. Further study is warranted to evaluate the disparity, and to focus educational efforts that may encourage osteopathic physicians outside of an OMT specialty to integrate the use of musculoskeletal manipulation into their practices.