Characteristics and Management of Geriatric Patients from a Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine/Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine (OMM) Clinic

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Background

Osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT) is used in the care of geriatric patients, but published descriptive data on the conditions and treatments is limited. This study seeks to provide data on the presentation and management of geriatric patients to guide providers and future studies.

Methods

This IRB approved, retrospective, observational study compiled descriptive data from electronic health records (EHR) of an OMM clinic for clinical encounters with patients ages ≥60 years, involving OMT and occurring July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2019. Demographic information, presenting complaints, assessments, OMT techniques used, and treatment response were tabulated.

Results

During the study period, 1238 patients accounted for 9155 clinical encounters. Patient ages were 49.2% aged 60-69 years, 32.6% aged 70-79, 15.4% aged 80-89, and 2.9% greater than 90. Female patients (850 [68.7%]) accounted for 6901 (75.4%) encounters. Mean (SD) number of encounters per patient per year was 4.49 (4.02). Across all complaints (12020) and assessments (64390), back complaints and assessments were most common (53.3% and 54.8%, respectively). Across 46100 somatic dysfunction assessments, thoracic and lumbar regions (15.8% and 14.1% respectively) were most common. Across 43862 techniques documented, muscle energy was most common (16.4%). Treatment response was documented in 7316 (79.9%) encounters with 7290 (79.6%) documenting improvement, unchanged in 15 (0.2%), resolution in 10 (0.1%), and 1 (0.01%) was worse.

Conclusion

Geriatric patients commonly presented with back complaints and received OMT directed toward the thoracic and lumbar regions. Muscle energy was most frequently used. Most patients showed improvement.

Limitations, including using a single clinic and excluding free text descriptions, may limit the generalizability of findings. This data can guide providers regarding patient referrals and areas for future studies.