

Minimum Research Competencies for Osteopath Clinicians

An osteopath should be able to appraise medical and scientific literature critically and incorporate relevant and contemporary information into practice.

The osteopath should know the benefits and risks of procedures and care and communicate these to patients in a way they can understand to help patients to make informed choices about their personal healthcare and to inform their consent to osteopathic care.

In collaboration with patients, osteopaths should be able to select an appropriate course of clinical action based on a rational decision-making process which includes critical consideration of limits of competence, the likely effects of osteopathic treatment, relevant research and the individual patient's personal circumstances.

Osteopaths should be able to support the patient to reach an understanding of the significance of the potential effect and risks of the treatment and enhance the patient's understanding and commitment to individual exercise, preventive measures, adapting lifestyle and diet, as well as making use of healthcare disciplines, as appropriate.

In terms of quality management osteopaths should be able to assess patient satisfaction; and continuously audit, and or evaluate processes within the practice for improving service delivery and patient care.

Fundamentally all osteopaths in practice should have an awareness around: research methodology, research delivery, research informed practice, working with others and collaborating in research.

A minimum level of research awareness is suggested based on a consensus study by Albarqouni *et al* (2018).

For each individual health care practitioner, they classified key research competencies into 6 areas:

- knowledge about the rationale for evidence informed practice and use of research
- an individual's ability to ask clinical questions and be curious
- the ability to acquire knowledge to answer clinical questions
- the ability to appraise and interpret that knowledge / research information
- the competence to apply the research knowledge in practice and then
- to be able to evaluate the effect of implementing that knowledge and or changing practice.

Reflective Checklist

Core knowledge

- 1 Understand EBP as the integration of the best research evidence with clinical expertise in the context of the patient's unique values and circumstances
- 2 Practice the 5 steps of EBP: ask, acquire, appraise and interpret, apply, and evaluate
- 3 Understand the distinction between using research to inform clinical decision making vs conducting research

Ability to Ask clinical questions

1. Explain the difference between the types of questions that cannot typically be answered by research and those that can
2. Identify different types of clinical questions, such as questions about treatment, diagnosis, prognosis, and aetiology
3. Convert clinical queries into structured, answerable clinical questions

Ability to Acquire knowledge

- 1 Knowledge of different sources of research information, including biomedical research databases or databases of filtered or pre-appraised evidence or resources
2. Construct and carry out appropriate search strategies for information to answer clinical questions
3. Outline strategies to obtain the full text of articles and other evidence resources

Ability to Appraise and Interpret research information

1. Interpret different types of statistical measures of association and effect
2. Critically appraise research articles
3. Distinguish evidence-based from opinion-based clinical practice guidelines
4. Interpret data about harm and adverse effects of interventions

Ability to Apply knowledge and information in practice

- 1 Engage patients in the decision making process, using shared decision making, including explaining the evidence and integrating their preferences

Ability to Evaluate practice

1. Recognize the role of personal clinical audit in facilitating Evidence Based Practice

The next document provides a more detailed 'worksheet' of questions for osteopaths to check their knowledge and understanding of research and clinical practice as part of Continuing Professional Development.

References

1. Albarqouni et al. Core Competencies in Evidence-Based Practice for Health Professionals Consensus Statement Based on a Systematic Review and Delphi Survey *JAMA Network Open*. 2018;1(2):e180281. doi:[10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2018.0281](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2018.0281)
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4. Shaping Better Practice through Research: A practitioner Framework. J. Cooke K. Grafton J. Harris <https://cahpr.csp.org.uk/documents/cahpr-research-practitioners-framework>