

Manual Therapy Effect on Patients Presenting with Cervicalgia. Justin Franke.
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PURPOSE: Manual therapy is a specialized form of physical therapy delivered with the hands as opposed to a device or machine. Manual therapy includes treatments for joints and the soft tissues to relieve pain and increase range of motion. There exist a large number of research studies concerned with determining if manual therapy is an effective intervention for addressing the impairment of cervicalgia. The purpose of this review was to analyze current clinical trials on the efficacy of manual therapeutic interventions for managing cervical pain in a systematic review of literature using an accepted tool for assessing whether these studies assigned subjects randomly, properly accounted for all subjects, blinded the subjects and investigators, assured for similarities within and between control groups and treatment groups equally. **METHODS:** The included studies were outcome based clinical trials between the years 2000 and 2007 testing the effectiveness of manual therapy techniques as a form of treatment for cervical spine pain. Research was gathered from the online journal databases available through EBSCO host. A modified Guyatt tool (Herb Hamann, Martin Hodges, Bridget Evans. Effectiveness of Iontophoresis of Anti-inflammatory Medications in the Treatment of Common Musculoskeletal Inflammatory Conditions: A Systematic Review. Physical Therapy Reviews 2006; 11:00-00) was used to rigorously evaluate the selected studies based on specific criteria that determine the validity of the study. **CONCLUSION:** The results of the review found most of the selected clinical trials scored poorly on the modified Guyatt tool and not one study met all the criteria for validity. This review concluded that while manual therapy might very well be a viable option for treatment of cervicalgia, the need exists for more stringent clinical trials before evidence-based practitioners can accept the data. **DISCUSSION:** Manual therapy is a commonly used intervention in the treatment of cervical pain. However, using the modified Guyatt tool to measure the validity of clinical trials shows the scientific evidence for efficacy of this treatment intervention is scant. This does not rule out manual therapy as a viable intervention in the treatment of cervicalgia but does signal the need for more rigorous scientific study into this popular physical therapy approach.