Osteopathic Fascial Unwinding: A maximalist approach and its effects on interoception.

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Introduction/Background

Osteopathic Fascial Unwinding (OFU) is a process in which osteopath stimulates mechanoreceptors in the fascia by applying gentle touch on the patient who undergoes reaction in response, experienced as spontaneous movement. It is maximalist combined technique with direct and indirect actions (LIEM, TOZZI and CHILA, 2017). Interoception, ability to perceive internal homeostatic signals, plays a key role in the process of healing and resilience (FARB et al, 2015). Interoceptive afferences are conveyed up to anterior insular and cingular cortex which is also implicated in perception of pain, control of attention, emotions, decision making and problem solving (BORNEMANN et al, 2015). Fascial network allows us to have a sensory relation with patient's body. This study aims is to investigate if applying OFU could induced interoception’s changes, by focusing patient’s attention on his bodily signals.

Methods

43 osteopathic students were randomized in two groups: A and B. Three different sessions were conducting according to double-blind method. At the first, each group has filled in two questionnaires that assessed interoception (Multidimensional Assessment of Interoceptive Awareness, MAIA) and mindfulness (Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire, FFMQ). At the second session, OFU was performed on the group A and both groups have filled in the questionnaires. At the third session, OFU was performed on the group B and both groups have filled in the questionnaires.
Results

Group A had higher score after the technique for 9 items on 13 (69%), all questionnaires combined. For group B, 5 items on 13 (38%) were higher after the technique. Results were significant (p-value ≤0,05) for three items: "act with awareness", "nonreact" and "nonjudge".

Conclusion

All those items could be linked with the ideomotor movement used in OFU. These unconscious reflexes are probably induced by prior expectations, suggestions or preconceptions and could be influenced by interoception (MINASNY B, 2009). OFU has an effect on all body systems and could interact with the five existing models in osteopathic philosophy. This study suggests that fascial unwinding has an effect on interoception and that it allows patient to develop bodily sensations and regulate pain. Further investigations need to be conduct to confirm this hypothesis.

References


