

Complying with the ASA Guidelines

The published ASA guidelines give clearer guidance on what is acceptable to put in our websites and leaflets. Essentially we are limited in what we can say about conditions but we can talk about the patient groups that we treat. Remember, though, that almost all of our patients come from word of mouth referral and that your website may be mainly used for directions, the phone number and pictures/biographies of practitioners. If you have an analytics package for your website, take a look at which pages get most views and adjust accordingly.

Please do review your online and print promotional materials to make sure that you comply. The copy in the green boxes in the new guidelines may save you the trouble of dreaming up the right form of words. There is not much that is specific to cranial osteopathy, so we have written something for you, based on the study that was done for the SCCO a couple of years ago. There is also a paragraph on safety based on published work by NCOR. The Copy Advice team at the ASA have said that this copy complies, although they will not guarantee this.

Additionally the iO have a resource showing stats, how to use testimonials etc, which can be accessed at <https://www.iosteopathy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Website-Advice-leaflet-v5.pdf> and the NCOR website has all the latest research news at <https://www.ncor.org.uk/research/>

Here is the approved copy. Just cut and paste (including the references):

Cranial Osteopathy Patient Survey

A recent survey of over 500 cranial osteopathy patients (Wilkinson et al, 2015) found that most of them were specifically seeking this kind of treatment. Patients of all ages were seen, with 13% babies under one year and 10% people over 70 years of age. Over half of patients had symptoms of less than six weeks duration while almost a third of patients had been suffering from their symptoms for more than three months. 45% of patients had already had some form of care from the NHS.

Two-thirds of patients in the survey presented with musculo-skeletal aches and pains but there were also a range of other problems and some patients wanting preventative care.

When compared to the general osteopathic population, numbers of treatments, symptom responses and adverse reaction rates were similar. Adverse treatment reactions reported after cranial osteopathy were reported as appearing to be temporary (less than 48 hours) and typically involved fatigue or a mild exacerbation of symptoms such as pain or stiffness.

Is Osteopathy Safe?

A recent review of complaints against osteopaths (Carnes, 2016) found that in 2014, out of 4816 osteopaths giving 7.8 million treatments, only 257 complaints were made. About half of these were based on poor or inappropriate communication by the osteopath and about half were based on issues with treatment. So, your osteopath has a responsibility to communicate clearly with you and we ask you to question us and make sure you have understood what we think the problem is and what we plan to do about it!

References

Carnes, D. (2016). What can osteopaths learn from concerns and complaints raised against them? A review of insurance and regulator reports. *International Journal of Osteopathic Medicine*, 22 (4), 3-10.

Wilkinson, J., Thomas, K., Freeman, J., & McKenna, B. (2015). Day to day practice of osteopaths using osteopathy in the cranial field who are affiliated with the Sutherland Cranial College of Osteopathy (SCCO): a national survey by means of a standardised data collection tool. *International Journal of Osteopathic Medicine*, 18 (1), 13-21.