

The Tension between Traditional and Modern Frameworks – Navigating the Clash of Competing Models for Osteopathy

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Conceptual models for osteopathic assessment, treatment, and therapeutic action have evolved significantly since the inception of osteopathy. Traditionally, osteopathy was rooted in a biomedical framework with a focus on biomechanical function and dysfunction. However, over the past 150 years, advances in modern science have introduced challenges to traditional osteopathic models, creating tension between conventional and newer approaches. This tension continues today, with a notable divide between traditionalist perspectives and progressive approaches that emphasize evidence-based medicine, pain science, and the role of psychosocial factors. For some, this divide threatens to create a schism within the profession.

This presentation aims to address the conflict between these competing models and approaches in osteopathy. It will illustrate a method for structuring patient diagnoses, which has been utilized in a university teaching clinic for the past six years. This diagnostic model is designed to facilitate communication with other medical and allied health professionals and provides a comprehensive clinical impression. It integrates osteopathic and biomechanical considerations with the prevailing pain process, as well as relevant pathological and psychosocial factors.