OMT for Cervicogenic Headache: A Primary Care Physician Approach

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A Presentation for AOMA, November, 2015:
Cervicogenic headache (CHA) accounts for a significant percentage of all headaches (14-18%, Pfaffenrath, 1990), and results in a significant loss of work productivity, cost to society, as well as pain and suffering (Stewart, WF, 2003). Over half of patients seen by pain specialists have CHA (Haldeman S, 2001). Manual treatment is effective for cervicogenic headache (Nilsson et al, 1997). The presentation is a brief overview of cervicogenic headache and evidence-based recommendations for manual treatment applications (OMT), followed by a laboratory session focusing on osteopathic manipulative treatments (OMT) appropriate for CHA, and the primary care physician.

Lecture Session (1 Hr) Objectives:
1. Discuss epidemiology, functional anatomy and pathophysiology involved in cervicogenic headache.
2. Describe history and physical findings consistent with cervicogenic headache.
3. Discuss evidence-based recommendations for manual medicine in cervicogenic headache.
4. Discuss and view a demonstration of OMT for cervicogenic headache.

Lecture Details:
1. What is Cervicogenic Headache?
2. Epidemiology
3. Common history and physical findings
4. Functional Anatomy: Joints, Muscles, Nerves, Lymphatics
5. Pathophysiology - Cervical-trigeminal pain pathway, Facet joint pain referral patterns
7. History perspectives (Still, Barber)
8. Goals for OMT in Cervicogenic Headache

Lab Session (1 Hr) Objectives:
1. Perform regional screening examination of the cervical spine.
2. Diagnose somatic dysfunction in the cervical and upper thoracic regions.
3. Discuss and perform myofascial release, muscle energy, HVLA, and lymphatic techniques for a cervicogenic headache patient.

Lab Procedures:
1. Regional screening for cervical spine
2. Thoracic inlet treatment
3. Upper thoracic inhibition and scapulothoracic release
4. Soft tissue treatment for cervical spine
5. Select Counterstrain points for cervical region
6. Segmental diagnosis for typical cervicals, AA, and OA
7. Historical techniques (1908) for OA, AA, Cervical
8. Indirect balanced ligamentous tension, muscle energy treatment, and HVLA (Greenman Method), for typical cervicals, AA, and OA
References:

- Pfaffenrath V, et al, Diagnostics of cervicogenic headache, Functional Neurology 1990; 5:159-64
- Osteopathy Complete, Elmer Barber DO., 5th ed., Kansas City 1906

Sources:

1. An Illustrated Practice of Osteopathy-1908, A.T. Still University, Kirksville, MO 2005
2. Osteopathy Complete, Elmer Barber DO., 5th ed., Kansas City 1906
6. Select lectures shared by Educational Council on Osteopathic Principles