

Evidence based practice in osteopathy: a scoping review of its use and implementation

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Gomez, M; Selva, L; Alvarez, G.

Corresponding author:

Marc Gomez Rodon

marcgomezrodon@hotmail.com

Author Affiliation:

University of Lleida.

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Conflicts of interest - None declared.

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Amendments - This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 15 January 2026 and was last updated on 15 January 2026.

INTRODUCTION

Review question / Objective This scoping review aims to map the current state of Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) implementation within the osteopathic profession. Given that EBP is a critical requirement for ensuring patient safety and fostering the professional recognition of osteopathy within modern healthcare systems, it is essential to analyze its core components and application. This review specifically focuses on identifying barriers and facilitators to EBP uptake, accounting for the significant global diversity in osteopathic education and professional backgrounds.

Rationale To date, there is a lack of comprehensive evidence synthesis that addresses this topic. This scoping review will systematically map and consolidate diverse evidence sources into a single cohesive publication. This synthesis is essential to inform future interventions and to

establish a standardized baseline for EBP implementation within the osteopathic profession.

Condition being studied EBP in osteopathy. This includes the level of implementation, attitudes, and skills among osteopaths, as well as the identification of barriers and facilitators influencing its integration into clinical practice.

METHODS

Search strategy The main databases that will be used are Pubmed, Web of Science, PEDro, Google Scholar and Ostmed-DR. Only published studies will be sought. No language restrictions will be applied to the search to ensure a comprehensive mapping of the global literature on evidence-based practice in osteopathy.

The search strategy was first developed for PubMed. Due to the specific syntax requirements of different databases, the PubMed search strings

were adapted for other databases using Google's AI (Gemini). This AI-assisted process ensured that the original search terms and Boolean logic were accurately translated into the specific command languages and indexing systems (such as Scopus tags or CINAHL headings) of each database.

Pubmed search strings:

String 1: ("osteopathic physicians"[MeSH Terms] OR "osteopathic physicians"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic doctors"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopaths"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopath"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic doctor"[Title/Abstract] OR ("osteopathic medicine"[MeSH Terms] OR "osteopathy"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic manipulative medicine"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic manipulative treatment"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic treatment"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic therapy"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic medicine"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic manipulative therapy"[Title/Abstract])) AND ("Evidence-Based Practice"[MeSH Terms] OR "Evidence-Based Practice"[Title/Abstract] OR "Evidence Based Health Care"[Title/Abstract] OR "health care evidence based"[Title/Abstract] OR "healthcare evidence based"[Title/Abstract] OR "evidence based management healthcare"[Title/Abstract] OR "Evidence Based Health Care Management"[Title/Abstract] OR "Evidence Based Healthcare Management"[Title/Abstract])

String 2: ("osteopathic physicians"[MeSH Terms] OR "osteopathic physicians"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic doctors"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopaths"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopath"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic doctor"[Title/Abstract] OR ("osteopathic medicine"[MeSH Terms] OR "osteopathy"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic manipulative medicine"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic manipulative treatment"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic treatment"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic therapy"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic medicine"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic manipulative therapy"[Title/Abstract])) AND ("Evidence-Based Practice"[MeSH Terms] OR "Evidence-Based Practice"[Title/Abstract] OR "Evidence Based Health Care"[Title/Abstract] OR "health care evidence based"[Title/Abstract] OR "healthcare evidence based"[Title/Abstract] OR "evidence based management healthcare"[Title/Abstract] OR "Evidence Based Health Care Management"[Title/Abstract] OR "Evidence Based Healthcare Management"[Title/Abstract]) AND ("attitude"[MeSH Terms] OR "attitudes"[Title/Abstract] OR "opinions"[Title/Abstract] OR "sentiments "[Title/Abstract] OR "predisposition"[Title/Abstract])

String 3: ("osteopathic physicians"[MeSH Terms] OR "osteopathic physicians"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic doctors"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopaths"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopath"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic doctor"[Title/Abstract] OR ("osteopathic medicine"[MeSH Terms] OR "osteopathy"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic manipulative medicine"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic manipulative treatment"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic treatment"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic therapy"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic medicine"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic manipulative therapy"[Title/Abstract])) AND ("Evidence-Based Practice"[MeSH Terms] OR "Evidence-Based Practice"[Title/Abstract] OR "Evidence Based Health Care"[Title/Abstract] OR "health care evidence based"[Title/Abstract] OR "healthcare evidence based"[Title/Abstract] OR "evidence based management healthcare"[Title/Abstract] OR "Evidence Based Health Care Management"[Title/Abstract] OR "Evidence Based Healthcare Management"[Title/Abstract]) AND ("problem-based learning"[MeSH Terms] OR "clinical competence"[MeSH Terms] OR "clinical competences"[Title/Abstract] OR "clinical skills"[Title/Abstract] OR "skills"[Title/Abstract] OR "abilities"[Title/Abstract] OR "habilities"[Title/Abstract])

String 4: ("osteopathic physicians"[MeSH Terms] OR "osteopathic physicians"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic doctors"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopaths"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopath"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic doctor"[Title/Abstract] OR ("osteopathic medicine"[MeSH Terms] OR "osteopathy"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic manipulative medicine"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic manipulative treatment"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic treatment"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic therapy"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic medicine"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic manipulative therapy"[Title/Abstract])) AND ("Evidence-Based Practice"[MeSH Terms] OR "Evidence-Based Practice"[Title/Abstract] OR "Evidence Based Health Care"[Title/Abstract] OR "health care evidence based"[Title/Abstract] OR "healthcare evidence based"[Title/Abstract] OR "evidence based management healthcare"[Title/Abstract] OR "Evidence Based Health Care Management"[Title/Abstract] OR "Evidence Based Healthcare Management"[Title/Abstract]) AND ("barriers"[Title/Abstract] OR "barrier"[Title/Abstract])

String 5: ("osteopathic physicians"[MeSH Terms] OR "osteopathic physicians"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic doctors"[Title/Abstract] OR

"osteopaths"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopath"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic doctor"[Title/Abstract] OR ("osteopathic medicine"[MeSH Terms] OR "osteopathy"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic manipulative medicine"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic manipulative treatment"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic treatment"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic therapy"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic medicine"[Title/Abstract] OR "osteopathic manipulative therapy"[Title/Abstract])) AND ("Evidence-Based Practice"[MeSH Terms] OR "Evidence-Based Practice"[Title/Abstract] OR "Evidence Based Health Care"[Title/Abstract] OR "health care evidence based"[Title/Abstract] OR "healthcare evidence based"[Title/Abstract] OR "evidence based management healthcare"[Title/Abstract] OR "Evidence Based Health Care Management"[Title/Abstract] OR "Evidence Based Healthcare Management"[Title/Abstract]) AND ("enhancer"[Title/Abstract] OR "facilitator"[Title/Abstract]).

Participant or population The population of interest includes professional osteopaths, regardless of their specific regulatory status or educational pathway in their respective countries.

Intervention Not applicable. This is a scoping review aimed at mapping literature regarding the implementation, barriers, and facilitators of EBP in osteopathy.

Comparator Not applicable.

Study designs to be included To ensure a comprehensive mapping of the topic, this scoping review will include all types of scientific publications, ranging from primary empirical research (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods) to secondary research and expert opinion papers, provided they have been published in peer-reviewed journals. This inclusive approach is justified by the emergent state of research in the osteopathic field, aiming to capture the full breadth of the professional discourse on EBP implementation, barriers, and facilitators.

Eligibility criteria This scoping review will include all peer-reviewed scientific publications addressing EBP within the field of osteopathy. No restrictions will be applied regarding study design; hence, primary research (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods), systematic reviews, conceptual frameworks, and expert opinion pieces will be considered to ensure a comprehensive mapping of the literature.

Scientific publications will be excluded if they do not specifically address the use, implementation,

barriers, or facilitators of EBP, even if they pertain to the osteopathic field. Furthermore, studies focusing on EBP in other healthcare disciplines or manual therapy modalities (e.g., physiotherapy, chiropractic) will be excluded unless osteopathy is the primary focus of the analysis or the data for osteopathic practitioners is reported independently.

Information sources A comprehensive search was conducted across the following electronic databases: PubMed, Web of Science, Ostmed-DR and PEDro. These platforms were selected for their extensive coverage of biomedical and allied health literature, including osteopathy. To identify additional peer-reviewed publications not captured by the initial database search, Google Scholar was consulted.

Main outcome(s) The primary outcome of this scoping review is to provide a comprehensive map of the current state of EBP within the osteopathic profession.

Specific outcomes to be extracted and analyzed include:

- Knowledge and skills related to EBP among osteopaths.
- Attitudes, beliefs and perceptions attributed to EBP in clinical practice.
- Barriers and facilitators for the EBP implementation.
- EBP behaviours.

Additional outcome(s) There are not additional outcomes.

Quality assessment / Risk of bias analysis In accordance with the JBI guidance for scoping reviews, a formal critical appraisal of the individual studies (quality assessment) is not planned. The primary objective of this review is to map the available evidence and discourse rather than to provide a synthesis of effects or evidence for clinical practice recommendations.

Strategy of data synthesis A descriptive analytical framework will be used to synthesize the findings. The synthesis will be divided into two parts:

1. Quantitative analysis: A descriptive summary of the included studies will be provided, including frequencies and percentages related to geographical distribution, year of publication, study designs, and participant characteristics.
2. Thematic synthesis: Data regarding knowledge, attitudes, barriers, and facilitators of EBP will be

categorized and synthesized using a thematic approach.

Subgroup analysis Subgroup analyses will be conducted to explore potential differences in EBP implementation, barriers, and facilitators based on:

- Geographical region or country: To account for different regulatory frameworks and educational standards.
- Professional background: Comparing 'osteopathic physicians' (e.g., US model) versus 'non-physician osteopaths' (e.g., European/Oceanian model).

Sensitivity analysis Not planned. Sensitivity analysis is generally not applicable to scoping reviews, as the primary objective is to map the available evidence regardless of study quality or effect size.

Language restriction No language restriction.

Country(ies) involved Spain.

Other relevant information None other relevant information.

Keywords Osteopathic medicine; Osteopathic Physicians; Osteopaths; Osteopathy; Evidence Based Practice; Attitudes; Skills.

Contributions of each author

Author 1 - Marc Gomez Rodon - Author 1 conceptualized the study, developed the search strategy, performed the literature search, conducted the study selection and data extraction, and drafted the protocol manuscript.

Email: marcgomezrodon@hotmail.com

Author 2 - Laia Selva Pareja - Author 2, as an expert in Health Education, provided specialized guidance on the conceptual framework and methodological design of the study, and conducted a critical review of the manuscript.

Email: laia.selva@udl.cat

Author 3 - Gerard Alvarez Bustins - Author 2, as an expert in Osteopathy, provided specialized guidance on the conceptual framework and methodological design of the study, and conducted a critical review of the manuscript.

Email: gerardalv@gmail.com