

The Benefits of CranioSacral Therapy

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Diving into the pool of manual therapies opens vistas of greater healing when combined with traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). It excites me to witness the human body reach its healing potential through the integration of TCM and bodywork. Even TCM practitioners of ancient times witnessed the benefits of manual therapies and passed this knowledge on to their apprentices. Today, manual therapies continue to evolve, and manual therapy practitioners are continually seeking ways to refine their craft. One of the most beneficial manual therapies includes CranioSacral Therapy (CST).

In the 1920s, William G. Sutherland, a doctor of osteopathy, began to investigate cranial bones and their movement at the cranial sutures. Decades later, John E. Upledger, DO, continued the investigation through intense clinical research, observation and hands-on experience. In the *CranioSacral Therapy Overview Study Guide*, Dr. Upledger describes CST as "a gentle, hands-on treatment method that focuses on alleviating restrictions to physiological motion of all the bones of the skull, including the face and mouth, as well as the vertebral column, sacrum, coccyx and pelvis." Additionally, the practitioner may focus "on normalizing abnormal tensions and stresses in the meningeal membrane, with special attention to the outermost membrane, the dura mater and its fascial connections. Attention is paid to alleviating any obstacles to free movement by the cerebrospinal fluid within its membrane compartment and to normalizing and balancing perceived related energy fields." While CST may seem like a different animal - and it is - its objective is the same as TCM and all other CAM therapies: to facilitate the body's healing capacity.

CST has the power to effectively complement acupuncture and herbal medicine. According to Dr. Upledger, "The most powerful effects of CranioSacral Therapy are considered to be on the function of the central nervous system, the immune system, the endocrine system and the visceral organs via the autonomic nervous system." Additionally, "This therapy has been used with reported success in many cases of brain and spinal cord dysfunction." But not all of CST's physiological effects are global. Like acupuncture, CST addresses specific clinical conditions. "Other areas of claimed success include cerebral palsy, learning disabilities, seizure disorders, depressive reactions, menstrual dysfunction, motor dysfunction, strabismus (a vision disorder), temporomandibular joint problems, various headaches, chronic pain problems, and chronic fatigue syndrome."

TCM practitioners who integrate manual therapies into their practices are specialists and have the potential to enhance their patient's well-being exponentially. The blending of energies and the potential to effect physiological change from these two natural medicines will help your patients "... realize the healing potential that [they] possess as a part of [their] birthright."

For more information on CranioSacral Therapy, visit www.upledger.com.

