INTRODUCTION TO
OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

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Andrew Taylor (A.T.) Still, MD (1828 – 1917)

- Father of osteopathic medicine
- Born in Jonesville, VA ➔ Tennessee ➔ Missouri ➔ Kansas
- Rural farmer, hunter, inventor, local politician
- Pre-Civil War abolitionist
HISTORY

- Received his medical training through a process of apprenticeship, scholarly reading, and observation and treating of patients
- Enlisted in Kansas militia when Civil War began – served as military surgeon
- Attended the Kansas City School of Physicians and Surgeons immediately after the Civil War
- Left before receiving his formal degree
BECOMING A PHYSICIAN IN 19TH CENTURY AMERICA

ATTEND MEDICAL SCHOOL
• Set up practice
• Typically more urban practice
• Generally richer patients

APPRENTICE WITH A LICENSED PHYSICIAN
• 1 – several years
• Learn medicinals, midwifery, surgery
• Mentor would sign statement
• Sometimes involved test, sometimes just mentor’s statement
• Set up practice
• More rural practice
HISTORY

• Returned home from Civil War
  – His three children died of meningitis
  – Saw people addicted to morphine or alcohol (“no better than slavery on its worst days”)

• Common remedies of his day:
  – bloodletting
  – use of lead or mercury based purgatives to induce bowel movements
“I firmly believe that if the whole materia medica, as now used, could be sunk to the bottom of the sea, it would be better for mankind—and all the worse for the fishes.”

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr
(statement at Massachusetts Medical Society, 1860)
HISTORY

• The central issue of medicine was not which drug to use, but whether drugging the patient in and of itself was an appropriate form of therapy

• Still spent much time studying human remains and illness, looking for a structure-function approach to health
HISTORY

• His conclusion - contemporary medical treatment was unscientifically based, largely ineffective, and outright harmful

• Dr. Still sought a different approach to understanding disease
Dr. Still felt that the body possessed an efficient “chemical laboratory” capable of healing by creating all of the substances that it needed.

In sickness the answer was not found necessarily in administering more drugs.

Dr. Still felt the solution to disease was to find out what was creating the bodily disturbance and remove that interference so that the body could return to its normal state of healthful homeostasis.
DEVELOPING HIS PRACTICE...

- Initially blended the use of osteopathic theory & practice with the drugs of the time for several years.

- Finally stopped using drugs as he found their utility of no greater benefit, but definitely more harm, than his manipulations.

- Coined the osteopathic principles in 1874.
“Osteopathy is compounded of two words, osteon, meaning bone, and pathos, (or) pathine), to suffer. I reasoned that the bone, “Osteon”, was the starting point from which I was to ascertain the cause of pathological conditions, and so I combined the “Osteo” with the “pathy” and had as a result, Osteopathy.”
OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

“that science which consists of such exact, exhaustive, and verifiable knowledge of the structure and function of the human mechanism, anatomical, physiological and psychological, including the chemistry and physics of its known elements, as has made discoverable certain organic laws and remedial resources, within the body itself, by which nature under the scientific treatment peculiar to osteopathic practice, apart from all ordinary methods of extraneous, artificial, or medicinal stimulation, and in harmonious accord with its own mechanical principles, molecular activities, and metabolic processes, may recover from displacements, disorganizations, derangements, and consequent disease, and regained its normal equilibrium of form and function in health and strength”
FOUR TENETS OF OSTEOPATHIC PHILOSOPHY

1. The body is a unit.

2. The body possesses self-regulatory, self-healing, and health maintenance mechanisms.

3. Structure and function are reciprocally interrelated.

4. Rational therapy is based on an understanding of body unity, self-regulatory mechanisms, and the interrelationship of structure and function.
OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE...

• Focuses on examining and treating the whole person not just the symptoms

• Focuses on preventive maintenance

• Uses manipulation (OMM/OMT) as a modality of treatment

• Training as a generalist first and a specialist second
WHAT ARE D.O.’s?

- There are two licenses of unlimited medical practice in the US: Medical Doctors (MDs) and Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine (DOs)

- DOs practice surgery, obstetrics, and prescribe medications just like MDs
D.O.’s vs MD’s

• Similarities
  – Application process
  – Four year program
  – National boards
  – State licensing boards
  – Unlimited rights to practice all phases of medicine

• Distinctions
  – Philosophy (holistic/preventive care)
  – Emphasis on musculoskeletal system
  – Generalist education in primary care: (family practice, OB/GYN, pediatrics, internal medicine, emergency medicine)
D.O.’s vs MD’s

• After medical school, both DOs and MDs can choose to practice in a specialty area of medicine (from family medicine to neurosurgery) after completing a residency program which requires an additional three to eight years of training.
NUMBERS...

- 31 osteopathic colleges
  - 46 sites
  - 31 states
- About 75,000 DOs in practice.
- By 2020 - $\frac{1}{4}$ of all medical students will be osteopathic medical students
FUTURE OF OSTEOPATHY

• Between 1989 and 1994, D.O. growth outpaced M.D. growth by ~2 times

• By the year 2020, over 80,000 osteopathic physicians will be in practice in the U.S.
D.O.’s BRING SOMETHING EXTRA TO MEDICINE

• DOs practice a "whole person" approach to medicine

• Instead of treating specific symptoms or illnesses, they assess the overall health of their patients including home, work, and spiritual environments

http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/education/schools/school-of-medicine/about/school-of-medicine-news/education-news/images/archives22013.jpg
D.O.’s BRING SOMETHING EXTRA TO MEDICINE

• Osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT) is incorporated in the training and practice of osteopathic physicians

• Using OMT, osteopathic physicians use their hands to diagnose injury and illness and to encourage the body’s natural tendency toward good health

• By combining all other medical procedures with OMT, DOs offer their patients the most comprehensive care available in medicine today
WHAT EXACTLY IS ‘OMT’?

• Utilizing your hands to help with diagnosis and subsequent treatment

• These tools always travel with you
OMT: What is it good for?

• Decrease impact of structural dysfunction on body systems
• Optimize function
• Support homeostasis
• Alleviate musculoskeletal pain
• Improve respiratory mechanics
• Improve venous and lymphatic drainage
OMT: What is it good for?

- Back and neck pain: acute, chronic
- Headaches
- Other Joint Pain
- Fibromyalgia
- Sinusitis
- Asthma
- COPD
- Bronchitis
- Pneumonia
- Otitis Media
- Pelvic Pain
- Sciatica
- Radiculopathy
- Carpal Tunnel
- TMJ
- Arthritis
- Pregnancy
http://www.aacom.org/become-a-doctor/about-om


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