

A Clinician's Guide to Osteopathic Manipulative Techniques to Improve the Treatment of Somatic Complaints of Pregnancy: Recommendations Provided by Gestational Week

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Introduction/Background:

Popular publications such as What To Expect When You're Expecting (WTE) present common pregnancy symptoms of millions of women—many of which may be effectively treated using Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine (OMM). The addition of OMM to the American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists (ACOG) standard prenatal care regimen has been shown to help alleviate somatic dysfunction in pregnancy. However, current recommendations are limited such that there is no OMM protocol focused on the entire course of pregnancy.

Objective:

To review evidence for OMM and utilize the authors' clinical experience to create an OMM treatment protocol for prenatal visits. The goal of this protocol is to offer recommendations for OMM-trained clinicians to use their skills to enhance physiologic function, facilitate adaptation to the changes of pregnancy, and ultimately improve the experience of childbearing for pregnant patients.

Methods:

The protocol was organized in a format where prenatal visits by gestational week (derived from ACOG recommendations) were listed with 'New Patient Concerns' (derived from WTE) that were addressed with a proposed 'OMM Protocol' (literature review of PubMed database, A.T. Still University Library Still One Search database, Journal of the American Osteopathic Association, relevant article reference lists, and authors' clinical experience).

Results:

A comprehensive protocol was created addressing treatment of common symptoms and somatic dysfunction of pregnancy with OMM.

Conclusions:

Pregnancy is a true test of the ability of an osteopathic physician to consider all elements of the patient. We hope this protocol will serve as a resource for the osteopathic physician in recognition and treatment of somatic dysfunction in pregnancy, as well as promotion of OMM as a validated treatment modality to the public.