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Review

A review of the physiology of cranial osteopathy

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Abstract

The models generally used to explain the practice of cranial osteopathy have not been supported by reliable research. This paper reviews and explores the relevant physiology and finds much to advance knowledge in this field. Arterial vasomotor waves have a frequency similar to reports of cranial rhythmic impulses; these are controlled by the sympathetic nervous system. Thermoregulation can reverse venous flow through emissary veins of the skull. Cerebrospinal fluid is circulated by arterial pulsations and is partially drained via the cribiform plate into nasal and cervical lymphatics. A model for the practice of cranial osteopathy based on well-researched physiology is proposed, and some clinical implications outlined. Some reasons for poor interobserver agreement in palpatory studies are discussed. This paper should provide a basis for informed research in this subject in the future.



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Key Words

cranial; osteopathy; field
cerebrospinal fluid

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