

## Benefits of Craniosacral Therapy in Patients with Chronic Low Back Pain: A Randomized Controlled Trial.

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### Abstract

**OBJECTIVES:** To evaluate the effects of craniosacral therapy on disability, pain intensity, quality of life, and mobility in patients with low back pain.

**DESIGN:** A single-blinded randomized controlled trial.

**PATIENTS:** Sixty-four patients with chronic nonspecific low back pain (mean age  $\pm$  SD,  $50 \pm 12$  years; 66% female) who were referred for physical therapy at a clinical unit of the Health Science School of the University of Almeria (Spain).

**INTERVENTIONS:** Participants were randomly assigned to an experimental group (10 sessions of craniosacral therapy) or a control group (10 sessions of classic massage).

**OUTCOME MEASURES:** Disability (Roland Morris Disability Questionnaire [RMQ, primary outcome] and Oswestry Disability Index), pain intensity (10-point numeric pain rating scale), kinesiophobia (Tampa Scale of Kinesiophobia), isometric endurance of trunk flexor muscles (McQuade test), lumbar mobility in flexion, hemoglobin oxygen saturation, systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure, hemodynamic measures (cardiac index), and biochemical estimation of interstitial fluid. These outcomes were registered at baseline, after treatment, and 1-month follow-up.

**RESULTS:** No statistically significant differences were seen between groups for the main outcome of the study, the RMQ ( $p = 0.060$ ). However, patients receiving craniosacral therapy experienced greater improvement in pain intensity ( $p \leq 0.008$ ), hemoglobin oxygen saturation ( $p \leq 0.028$ ), and systolic blood pressure ( $p \leq 0.029$ ) at immediate- and medium-term and serum potassium ( $p = 0.023$ ) level and magnesium ( $p = 0.012$ ) at short-term than those receiving classic massage.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Ten sessions of craniosacral therapy resulted in a statistically greater improvement in pain intensity, hemoglobin oxygen saturation, systolic blood pressure, serum potassium, and magnesium level than did 10 sessions of classic massage in patients with low back pain.

[Indexed for MEDLINE]



**Publication type, MeSH terms, Substance**



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