

Craniosacral Therapy

While the origin of craniosacral motion is still in question, the theory that under normal conditions the skull is in constant motion is now new; it was introduced to the osteopathic profession over 50 years ago. Craniosacral Therapy is a concept based upon anatomical, physiological, and therapeutic observations. A craniosacral therapist sees the individual as an integrated totality based on the anatomy and physiology and its relationship between the systems in the body. The craniosacral system is a recently recognized, functioning and physiological system comprising the following anatomical parts:

- the meningeal membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord
- the bony structures to which the meningeal membranes attach
- the soft tissues to which the meningeal membranes attach
- the cerebrospinal fluid
- the structures related to the production, resorption and containment of the cerebrospinal fluid.

The craniosacral system is related to and exerts an influence as well as being influenced by the following systems:

- Nervous
- Musculoskeletal
- Vascular
- Lymphatic
- Endocrine
- Respiratory

Any abnormality in the structure or function of any of these systems may influence the craniosacral system and vice versa. This can have profound and often detrimental effects on the development or function of the nervous system, particularly in the brain. The craniosacral system provides the internal environment for the development, growth and functional efficiency of the brain and spinal cord from the time of embryonic formation until death.

The craniosacral system is characterized by the rhythmic, mobile activity that persists throughout life. It occurs in humans, other primates, canines, felines and most other vertebrates. It is distinctly different from the activity of the heart and the alpha rhythm of the brain. The rate of craniosacral rhythm in normally functioning humans is between 6 and 12 cycles per minute. In normal people this rhythm is quite stable and does not fluctuate like those of the heart or brain. Hyperkinetic children have been observed to present with abnormally rapid craniosacral rhythmic rates, as have patients suffering from acute illnesses with a fever. Patients with brain damage often present with abnormally low rhythmic rates. As the clinical conditions improve, the rhythmic rates move toward the normal range.

Source: Upledger, J. E. and Vredevoogd, J.D. Craniosacral Therapy. 1983: Eastland Press. Seattle, Washington.