New & noteworthy

Consensus programs and documents—works in progress

ECOP

The Educational Council on Osteopathic Principles (ECOP) is composed of representatives from the osteopathic manipulative medicine (OMM) departments at each of the 19 colleges of osteopathic medicine. ECOP is a component of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM). The ECOP mission is to develop consensus programs and documents for the purpose of standardizing the theoretical, practical academic content of osteopathic medical education.

The last ECOP meeting was held at the University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth–Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine (UNTHSC/TCOM) from September 21 to 23, 2000. This was the first meeting at which 18 of the 19 osteopathic medical schools had representatives in attendance. Following are some of the projects developed or in development.

Core curriculum project

The Core Curriculum document was prepared over several years by the ECOP council, beginning in the mid-1980s. At nearly 850 pages, it was unwieldy for the purpose it was intended: to coordinate osteopathic principles and practice with corroborating basic science material. The bound version contains references to standard basic and clinical science texts and was available at each school, usually through the OMM department. Most often, if the document was used at all, it was as a few photocopied pages distributed to interested clinicians and basic scientists. But, thanks to former ECOP member William Kuchera, DO, FAAO, and current ECOP member and former chairman Robert Kappler, DO, FAAO, the material has entered the computer age. Key words and subjects can be entered and automatically located through a search function. Subject headings such as “Anatomy” and “Physiology” exist in a grid chart cross-referenced with regions of the body. Material can be more easily obtained by clicking on the region/topic of interest. The program has been distributed and is available through the OMM departments at each of the osteopathic medical schools. It is still in a fairly raw form, but along with the other available texts, it represents corroboration of osteopathic principles and practice.

COILS project

The Clinical Osteopathically Integrated Learning Scenarios (COILS) project was developed as a means of providing resource materials for the Osteopathic Postgraduate Teaching Institute (OPTI) hospital, osteopathic intern, and residency training sites.

COILS modules are designed to provide a more uniform and structured method of evaluating the cognitive and psychomotor osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT) skills of externs, interns, and residents engaged in an osteopathic medical training program. Each scenario is composed of a case study, differential diagnoses, learning objectives, source material, appropriate interventions, and checklists. Each module is designed primarily for use at clinical sites with an attending physician to supervise discussion and demonstrate osteopathic manipulative techniques, each within a self-contained unit.

Each COIL Scenario has two sections:

- Section 1 is a roundtable discussion workshop for case-based learning, cognitive evaluation, and practicing psychomotor skills.
- Section 2 is a patient-based application workshop for supervised evaluation of psychomotor skills. This includes the application of applied OMT of a
patient or a mock patient. The outcome measurement instruments include a COMLEX-type test of at least five questions for each COIL Scenario. Each module also contains a critical actions evaluation checklist. The osteopathic musculoskeletal examination form for the hospitalized patient is used for each patient.

To date, 11 COILS have been developed or are in development. They address topics that include pneumonia, congestive heart failure, carpal tunnel syndrome, chronic obstructive airways disease, whiplash injury, asthma, abdominal surgery, postoperative coronary bypass surgery, and headache.

Each COIL Scenario or module focuses primarily on the palpatory diagnosis, evaluation, and application of OMT for a patient with a specific clinical presentation. The project is designed to use case-based instruction to focus on the musculoskeletal system as an end point both in diagnosis and treatment. The project hopes to achieve multiple goals that include an exploration of the pathophysiology of each disease entity from an osteopathic medical perspective, the development of a rationale for osteopathic diagnosis and manipulative treatment, and the establishment of a proper perspective for the incorporation of palpatory diagnosis and manipulative treatment into the overall plan of the management of patients.

Although the two sections of the module may be used as a single program, time limitations and required duties may indicate that each section be used as a separate workshop. This flexibility gives the student or physician time to practice the appropriate OMT techniques before completing the second section.

Standard OMM curriculum

A current project undertaken by the ECOP is the development of a “gold standard” OMM curriculum. The intention is to develop a framework rather than a minimum program outline. William Morris, DO, is coordinating the project.

American Academy of Osteopathy (AAO) Web site

The AAO recently reformulated and relocated its Web site www.academyofosteopathy.org. The site contains complete copies of recent issues of the AAO Journal and scheduled upcoming continuing medical education programs offered through the AAO. On December 10, 2000, there had been a total of 2,383,873 visits by people searching the Internet. As of December 17, there had been 2,522,718 total visits. This average for the 7 days was 19,835 visits to the site per day. A previous estimate for the week of November 20 was 14,463 visitors.

Osteopathic Literature Database project

The AAO, primarily through the Louisa Burns Osteopathic Research Committee (LBORC) and ECOP, has been cooperating with the Osteopathic Literature Database Project. The primary purpose of this project, based at the UNTHSC/TCOM, is to develop a standard thesaurus of osteopathic terms suitable for an Internet search engine. Although this project may not seem of great importance on the surface, the growing emphasis on electronic search and acquisition of information as well as recognition by standard medical sources makes such a proactive development necessary. The database could be provided or accessible to some of the more common as well as standard medical literature search engines. Basic scientists, clinicians, osteopathic medical students, and physicians, as well as other interested persons, would be able to enter terms and retrieve relevant sites and information.

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Acknowledgment
Stephen J. Noone, CAE, executive director, American Academy of Osteopathy, and John Glover, DO, chairman of the Educational Council on Osteopathic Principles, AACOM, contributed to this article.