



Case-Base Discussion – 21st February 2023 (Ref 287)

Case - Communication and Consent

Today's CBD focused on the area of communication and consent, specifically what to do when a patient comes in saying something along the lines of, "I just need my L3 putting back." How much should we be influenced by the patient's request and, if we refuse to be 'manipulated' by the patient, how should we go about communicating this? You could argue that the patient does know what's best for them but as one of our listeners pointed out, what might have worked for a patient at one stage of their life, may no longer be applicable at the current time, for example due to ageing, operations, or a new medical diagnosis. Looking at this from a different perspective, it is often helpful to ask a new patient, who has seen another practitioner, what has worked for them in the past.

Suggestions for handling the situation varied from explaining to the patient that we look at the body holistically, rather than just manipulating the problem area, with a view to preventing re-occurrence of the problem, rather than just providing symptomatic relief; explaining that your approach may be slightly different but still effective; or deciding to carry out the patient's wishes if safe to do so but within the framework of your treatment plan. Good communication is crucial, as ever, gaining confidence of the patient to consider alternative techniques or modalities as appropriate. And, of course, if the patient does not give their consent, this has to be respected.

Linking this case with Osteopathic Practice Standards Themes

A - Communication and patient partnership (Identifying patient's expectations)

It is important to work with the patient to create a treatment plan that takes into consideration the patient's wishes and the knowledge and skills of the practitioner, and that this is clearly communicated to the patient, and informed consent gained.

B - Knowledge, skills and performance (Develop my scope of practice)

It is important to develop a broad range of techniques and treatment approaches, in order to be able to adapt your 'tool kit' to meet the needs of the patient.

C - Safety and quality in practice (Ensure quality of patient care)

Ensure that you put the health interests of the patient first, rather than carrying out a technique that the patient requests if it is unsafe to do so.

Linking this case with the Chiropractic Code

Principle A – Put the health interests of the patient first

Ensure that you put the health interests of the patient first, rather than carrying out a technique that the patient requests if it is unsafe to do so.

Principle E – Obtain informed consent for all aspects of patient care

It is important to work with the patient to create a treatment plan that takes into consideration the patient's wishes and the knowledge and skills of the practitioner, and that this is clearly communicated to the patient, and informed consent gained.

Principle G – Maintain, develop and work within your professional knowledge and skills

It is important to develop a broad range of techniques and treatment approaches in order to be able to adapt your 'tool kit' to meet the needs of the patient.