



NZ OSTEO

The first sense to ignite, touch is the last to burn out: long after our eyes betray us, our hands remain faithful to the world - *Frederick Sachs*

Spring 2025



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Message from the Editor:

Welcome to Spring and the latest issue of NZ Osteo. The 2025 ONZ Conference in Auckland was a wonderful success, with outstanding speakers and the chance for many of us to reconnect in person.

I've recently returned from a Hands with Hearts mission in Bali, where we treated children living with disabilities. This time I was joined by three more New Zealanders and Jill Headifen, founder of the Osteopathic Children's Foundation, was one of them. You'll find Jill's reflections on the trip in this issue.

The months are racing by and we'll be into Xmas before we know it!

-Morgan Hancock





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Message from the Chair

The Osteopaths New Zealand 2025 Conference, held in Auckland from 5-7 September, brought together osteopaths, students, researchers, and international colleagues for three days of learning, collaboration, and inspiration. Thank you to our sponsors - D3, Affiliated Insurance, VALD, and Tui Balms. Alana, you did a fantastic job with putting this conference together. With the theme Integrative Osteopathy: Foundations & Future, the programme explored how our profession retains its essence, while embracing innovation, technology, and partnership to meet the needs of Aotearoa today and into the future. At the heart of this year's gathering was our shared commitment to ONZ's strategic pou - Promote, Unite, and Support. These three pillars were woven throughout the programme, guiding both the clinical content and the broader conversations about where we stand today and where we aspire to be by 2030.

Promote

Sessions highlighted how osteopaths are contributing to integrated care. Our opening keynote from Australia set the scene, with Louise Bibby exploring osteopathy within the rehabilitation space and encouraging us to consider performance-based perspectives in practice like capacity.

The research stream, curated and led by Kesh, was impressive. It covered topics from postpartum care and concussion to connective tissue disorders, ME/CFS, and Long COVID. Presentations combined clinical depth with a bit of practical relevance, and Kesh's effortless humour kept the room engaged. Technology was another strong theme, with discussions on digital engagement, artificial intelligence, and how "tech meets touch" in modern healthcare. Together, these contributions showcased the adaptability of osteopathy.

Unite

Unity was not just a theme, it was something you could feel in every corner of the conference. Beyond the formal programme, we came together through networking breaks, shared meals, and those all-important side chats in the hallways. Conversations flowed as we all reflected on presentations, compared notes on clinical practice, and debated the future direction of osteopathy in Aotearoa.

Special Interest Group (SIG) forums gave space for focused dialogue in sports, paediatrics, women's health, and rehabilitation. These sessions allowed members to share evidence, clinical innovations, and lived experiences, amplifying diverse voices within the profession.

A special mention goes to CEO Antony Nicholas and President Matt Cooper of Osteopathy Australia, whose support and generosity highlighted the strength of our trans-Tasman relationship. Their presence underscored the importance of collaboration. We should as a profession look to the Australian association model. We need to have key people who can remain consistent, maintain continuity with key stakeholders and keep looking forward with our advocacy and direction rather than the short succession cycling and volunteer model.

We also acknowledge the Osteopathic Council of New Zealand (OCNZ) for convening regulators from Australia and the UK for a landmark panel session. This discussion provided valuable insights into workforce planning, patient engagement, and the regulatory challenges that unite us across borders. It was innovative to see this level of international collaboration for the good of profession.

The combination of structured forums, international collegiality, and informal whakawhanaungatanga underscored ONZ's vision of a cohesive profession. Whether around conference tables or over dinner, the connections forged this weekend will carry into practice, research, and leadership, again reminding us that collaboration is our greatest strength.

Support

Professional development was also in focus, highlighted by a special milestone: congratulations to Jim Webb, who has become the first New Zealand osteopath to achieve recognition as an Advanced Rehabilitation Osteopathic Practitioner through our ONZ pathway and the Osteopathy Australia review process. His achievement is a great milestone not just for Jim but for the profession, opening the door for others to follow. This advanced practice pathway marks the beginning of new opportunities for New Zealand osteopaths to gain recognition for specialist skills, deepen clinical expertise, and strengthen trans-Tasman collaboration.

To every osteopath who contributed, presented, or simply came with an open mind and heart, thank you. Together, we must build a profession that is visible, valued, and united, ensuring osteopathy has a place at the heart of Aotearoa's healthcare future.

Osteopathy in New Zealand will not be built by individuals in isolation, but by all of us, united in purpose.

Mauriora—here's to the journey ahead.

Ngā mihi nui,
--Anj Young

Research update

Dr Kesava Kovanur Sampath
Research Chair, ONZ



Kia Ora Koutou

The 2025 Combined Conference hosted by Osteopaths New Zealand (ONZ) and Osteopathy Australia (OA) was a resounding success, bringing together clinicians, educators, researchers, and students from across Aotearoa, Australia, and beyond. Among the many conference highlights, the research stream stood out for its depth, quality, and relevance to contemporary osteopathic practice. This article reflects on the outstanding contributions made during the research sessions, celebrating the innovation, rigour, and passion that continue to elevate the field of osteopathy.

Key Themes from the Research Program

Breathing, Manual Therapy & Long COVID Recovery

Presentations explored the role of breathing retraining and manual therapy in supporting recovery from long COVID, providing a holistic, evidence-informed approach to an emerging health challenge.

Workforce Trends and Sustainability

Data-driven insights were shared on osteopath retention, attrition, and workforce sustainability across Australia and New Zealand. These findings are crucial for informing policy, workforce planning, and education pathways.

Tendon Loading and Evidence-Based Rehabilitation

A detailed synthesis examined the comparative effects of eccentric versus concentric loading in tendon rehabilitation, offering clinically applicable insights grounded in strong research methodology.

Understanding Treatment Effects in Osteopathy

Research explored the interplay of specific, contextual, and non-specific treatment effects, providing a deeper understanding of the therapeutic encounter and how outcomes are shaped beyond the hands-on intervention alone.

Global Perspectives on Osteopathy and Competency Standards

Several presentations unpacked international data sets, including a decade-long analysis of osteopathy workforce patterns and longitudinal studies exploring patient engagement. This body of work offered a global lens on professional standards, competencies, and practice variations.

Innovation, Compassion and Clinical Impact

- A compelling case was made for the role of social support in postpartum care, positioning osteopathy as a compassionate, person-centered approach that goes beyond biomechanics.
- Ongoing work in falls prevention highlighted the role of osteopaths in addressing this significant public health issue through early intervention and interprofessional collaboration.
- An inspiring project showcased the evolution of an innovative lumbar support device, demonstrating how clinician-led product development can translate research into real-world solutions.

Integrating Research into Education

Research from clinical education settings focused on the use of Patient-Reported Outcome Measures

(PROMs), showcasing how outcome tracking is being embedded into student learning, supervision, and practice readiness.

Poster Presentations: Emerging Scholars in the Spotlight

The poster session featured high-quality submissions from student and early-career researchers. Topics ranged from musculoskeletal injury management to educational innovation, with a shared emphasis on clinical relevance, methodological soundness, and forward-thinking inquiry.

A Collective Acknowledgement

The research stream was a testament to the strength of osteopathic scholarship across Australasia. The wide range of topics, methodological diversity, and spirit of collaboration created a vibrant academic environment that enriched the overall conference experience. To all who presented, contributed, and engaged, we would like to thank you. Your work is shaping the future of osteopathy, informing best practice, and ensuring the profession continues to grow on a strong evidence base.



Recent publications

Several recent studies have been published, and their full citations are provided below;

Sampath, K. K., Berg, N., Paine, J. L., Orrock, P., & Standen, C. (2025). Profiling osteopathy in New Zealand: Insights into practitioner engagement with Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) and musculoskeletal (MSK) care. *International Journal of Osteopathic Medicine*.

Vaughan, B., Cerritelli, F., Draper-Rodi, J., Feehan, J., Ferreira, A. P. A., et al. (2025). Characteristics of Australian and New Zealand osteopaths who treat patients presenting with non-musculoskeletal complaints: Outcomes from two practice-based research networks. *Chiropractic & Manual Therapies*, 33(1), 35. DOI: [10.1186/s12998-025-00598-9](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12998-025-00598-9)

Kovanur Sampath, K., & Nitschke, T. (2025). Thoracic spinal injuries in adolescents: A narrative review. *Physical Therapy Reviews*, 30(3), 218–225. DOI: [10.20944/preprints202410.1873.v1](https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202410.1873.v1)

Research Update: PROMs Study Pilot Phase Underway

We are pleased to announce the launch of the pilot phase of the Patient-Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) Study, a key step in strengthening evidence-informed osteopathic care in Aotearoa New Zealand. Five clinics across the country are participating, representing a diverse cross-section of practice. Their involvement will provide critical insights into the feasibility, usefulness, and impact of routinely collecting patient-reported outcomes in everyday clinical settings.

We sincerely thank these clinics for their commitment. The data gathered will guide the wider rollout of the study, refine our outcome tools, and build a stronger understanding of patient experiences and treatment effectiveness.

The findings from this pilot will support clinical practice, inform education, and strengthen advocacy for evidence-based care across the profession. Stay tuned for further updates as the study progresses!

Research Committee

We are pleased to announce the appointment of **Kaspara Chaise** to our Research Committee. We also warmly welcome **Sine Wood** and **Vai Asomua** to our Research Consultation Committee. Their diverse perspectives and expertise will be invaluable as we continue to grow a collaborative, inclusive, and impactful research culture.

2025 has been a year of meaningful progress for osteopathic research, with collaborative achievements, publications, and key initiatives such as the PROMs pilot and the ONZ/OA Combined Conference. Our growing research networks and new committee members have added momentum to a thriving research culture, reinforcing our commitment to evidence-informed practice.

-Kesava Sampath



Healing Hands in Bali

A Journey with Hands with Heart

Jill Headifen MSc Ost. (U.K.) just returned from an inspiring 10-day mission in Bali with the Hands with Heart Foundation, alongside fellow NZ Volunteers Morgan Hancock, Victoria Cox & Dewi Thomas. She shares her experience here...

Hands With Heart (HWH) is a charity dedicated to raising disability awareness worldwide, offering quality care to communities in need, and providing unique training opportunities for volunteers to expand their knowledge and skills in osteopathy and related fields.

A Global Team

This mission brought together 32 volunteers from across the globe—Italy, Canada, the USA, England, France, Belgium, Spain, Australia, New Zealand, India, Ukraine, and Japan. The group included qualified osteopaths, osteopathic students still in training, DO medical students, an osteopathic doctor, and physiotherapists, some of whom were also completing their osteopathic studies. Three of the team leaders were either Principles or lecturers from European Osteopathic Schools.

What made the experience so powerful was the **spirit of collaboration**. People of different backgrounds, treatment approaches (cranial, structural, exercises etc) and levels of experience all united to work with and help children. Everyone had something meaningful to

contribute—even those new to paediatrics. At times, it felt like an intensive crash course in paediatric disability care, with each day bringing fresh challenges, insights, and opportunities to learn.

Centres of Care

Each morning, we were divided into groups and taken to one of four centres—or occasionally into a family home—to treat children and some adults with disabilities. One of the centres, The Legong Peduli Kasih Therapy Centre, specialises in caring for children with cerebral palsy and other disabilities, offering physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and hydrotherapy. Like Hands With Heart, this centre operates as a charity and depends heavily on donations.



Two of the centres were schools, one of which had an attached orphanage- home to many blind children.

A new centre for HWH was a women with disabilities support centre where the women were supporting each other in managing life with disabilities. Several of these women had had polio - something we would rarely experience in NZ.



With our osteopathic skills, we were able to add something different to the children's care. While we can't promise to "fix" these conditions, we can often improve physiological function. This improvement in tissue physiologic function was clear in children who had received treatment on previous missions. Along with treatment we're able to teach some of the physios at the centres new approaches. There is also an initiative to teach osteopathy in the physiotherapy school in Denpasar



Finding Connection

At the start of the mission, Dr Jorge Aranda, the founder of HWH, guided us to look inward and find a place of calm and compassion from which to work. It was vital to move beyond the initial pity or shock of what we were seeing and instead connect with the child in front of us.

We saw children with autism, ADD, cerebral palsy, club foot, and unusual genetic conditions. Sometimes a translator was available, but often it was down to careful **observation, and examination.**

Some of them had already experienced osteopathic care and would happily climb onto the treatment table with big smiles, eager for their session.

Certain children were hypersensitive and uncomfortable with touch, making any standard treatment approach impossible. In some cases, this connection was all we could offer. Yet even a small moment of connection—a smile, gentle presence, or calm energy—could mean as much as a physical adjustment.

Lessons Learned

For anyone interested in **paediatric osteopathy**, I cannot recommend this kind of mission highly enough. It's a rare and invaluable opportunity to encounter a wide range of conditions in a real-world setting, while also developing the adaptability, creativity, and compassion essential to our profession.

The experience also underscored how fortunate we are in our own countries. Our healthcare systems may not always feel perfect, but compared to many parts of the world, the level of care available to children is extraordinary. That contrast was both heartbreaking and motivating.



Organised with Care

The mission is thoughtfully structured, with accommodation, transport, and some meals provided. Experienced leaders such as Morgan—who has been part of these missions for four years—guide and support new volunteers throughout, ensuring both the practical and emotional aspects of the journey are cared for.

Ultimately, the Hands With Heart mission was not only a professional challenge but also a deeply personal one. It was a chance to grow as a practitioner, connect with people across cultures, and contribute to a cause that truly matters.

-Jill Headifen

**If you have interest in attending a mission and would like more details, you can contact Morgan at deputychair@osteopaths.nz*



The Institute of Osteopathy's mentoring platform

Mentoring can be hugely satisfying, can legitimately be classed as CPD and can help you to advance your own career, whether you are the mentor or mentee. Bringing the profession together by developing an effective professional support network for osteopaths will also retain valuable expertise within the profession and help to ensure that osteopathy remains a growing, thriving profession that is fit for the 21st century.

The iO mentoring platform is designed to make it easier for osteopaths who are looking for this sort of support to find a suitable mentor, and includes tools and guidance to support you, whether you want to be a mentor, a mentee, or both.

The iO has always held the view that osteopaths can only benefit from working and sharing with other osteopaths. This goes for observations too. To facilitate this, we are calling for osteopaths who are interested in providing observation/shadowing opportunities to add their details to the [iO mentoring platform](#)!

The iO want you to get the most out of this platform so if you have any enquiries about this initiative, please contact Mentoring@iOsteopathy.org

iMPROVE
DEVELOP
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Victorian Remedies: A Journey through 1896 Medical Advice

EXCERPTS FROM
"THE PEOPLES COMMON SENSE MEDICAL
ADVISOR IN PLAIN ENGLISH"

R.V Pierce M.D
Sixty sixth edition - 1896

A short disclaimer; ONZ does not recommend following any of the medical information nor does it endorse any of its statements. It is purely for interest and amusement. -Morgan Hancock

REGION OF FEEBLENESS

Although the middle lobe of the cerebrum does not denote or decide force of character, or energy of constitution, it has a certain sphere of normal action which is essential in the harmony of mind and body. If this region is largely developed, the constitution is languid, inefficient, sensitive, and abnormally disposed. But if it be deficient then the volitive energies will be preponderate, and there is a lack of those susceptibilities of constitution, which prevent excessive waste. The cerebral faculties are Fear, Anxiety, Sensibility, Servility, Relaxation, and Melancholy, and their excessive predominance indicates a weak, vacillating, irresolute character and the existence of those bodily conditions which produce general excitability and chronic derangement. A full development of this portion of the brain indicates that the person is naturally dependent, inferior, and subservient to stronger characters. Such a one is fearful, fretful, complaining, irritable, dejected, morose and sooner or later becomes a fit subject for chronic disease or organic derangement.

HUNGER

The organ of alimentiveness, located directly in front of the ear, indicates the functional conditions of the stomach, which when aroused by excessive hunger, exerts a debasing influence upon this and all of the adjacent organs, and is demoralising to both body and mind. In obedience to the instinct of hunger, children will slyly plunder gardens and orchards, displaying profligate, if not reckless, tendencies in the gratification of appetite.

VENTILATION OF SCHOOL ROOMS

The depression and faintness from which many students suffer, after being confined in a poorly ventilated schoolroom, is clearly traceable to vitiated air, while the evil is often ascribed to excessive mental exertion.

The effect of ventilation upon the health of students is a subject of universal interest to parents and educators, and at present is receiving the marked attention of school authorities. One such authority, during his visit to one of the schools, noted: "I visited several of the rooms and found the air in all offensive to the smell, the odour being such as one would imagine old boots, dirty clothes, and perspiration would make, if all boiled down together". The master said: "The air should have some degree of intelligence and should know that to better provide ventilation, it should know which exit to use from the room"

OF ALCOHOL

It will be said that alcohol cheers the weary, and that to take a little wine for the stomach's sake is one of the lessons that comes from the deep recesses of human nature. I am not so obstinate as to deny this argument. There are times in the life of man when the heart is oppressed, when the resistance to its motion is excessive, and when blood flows languidly to the centres of life, nervous and muscular. In these moments alcohol cheers. It lets loose the heart from its oppression, it lets flow a brisk current of blood into the failing organs, it aids nutritive changes, and all together is of a temporary service to man. So far alcohol may be good, and if its use could be limited to this one action, this one purpose, it would be amongst the most excellent of the gifts of science to mankind.

It is assumed by most persons that alcohol gives strength, and we hear feeble persons saying daily that they are being kept up by stimulants. This means actually that they are being kept down, but the sensation they derive from the immediate action of the stimulant deceives them and leads them to attribute passing good to what in the large majority of cases is persistent evil. The evidence is all perfect that alcohol gives no potential power to brain or muscle.



Need support?

ONZ advocacy, advice & support

Is everything going well at work, or do you sometimes wish you had someone outside of work to talk to? Are you dealing with a challenging work environment, issues with your principal or employees, or feeling unsure about how to handle or file a complaint? Perhaps you're feeling isolated or undervalued?

One of the key roles of ONZ is to provide support for members when things start to turn pear-shaped.

Even experienced practitioners encounter problems, and we have successfully supported many of our members through various issues.

If you have a problem, contact ONZ. We offer completely confidential support to help you address the challenges you're facing.

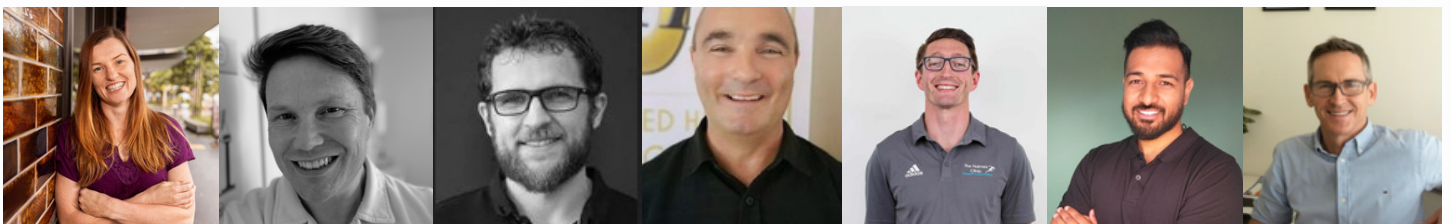
Online Learning Library



The ONZ online learning library now features a wealth of educational resources, accessible through the ONZ resources page. Among the recent additions are several comprehensive webinar series, including a three-part series that covers crucial business topics such as understanding your business, the realities of running one, distinguishing between contractors and sole traders, and mastering your financials. Additionally, there are specialized webinars that

delve into important subjects like bringing in overseas osteopaths, navigating immigration challenges, insurance considerations, and ACC32 Process & Appeals. This growing collection of modules and webinars is designed to support the ongoing professional development of osteopaths across a wide range of topics.

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