

This thesis provides an overview of research that has been conducted on the effectiveness of visceral osteopathy, and on variations in the diagnosis and treatment of adults and children.

- The central question is this: Are there differences in the literature regarding the application of visceral osteopathy for children compared to adults?  
Related questions include: How are these diagnosis carried out between children and adults? How have the treatments been described? What results have been achieved and have there been side effects?
- What is known from within the theoretical background on visceral osteopathy. Is it possible to conclude that a visceral approach for children exists and if so are there age boundaries associated with this?

A literature study was chosen as research method. Articles published between 2002 and 2014 on visceral osteopathy for children and adults were analysed, with particular focus on diagnostics, treatment, described results and the side effects of treatment.

- Researched is professional literature on visceral osteopathy:
  - 4 specialist textbooks from different authors on visceral osteopathy and child osteopathy.
  - 1 curriculum from a recognised tertiary training course in osteopathy. An analysis was made of the diagnostics used and taught for the treatment of children and adults.
- Using definitions of visceral osteopathy and visceral dysfunction, research was conducted on the terms internal organs (peritoneum), vascular structures, neurology, fascia, motility and mobility.

From the research it appears that fascial treatments are the most commonly applied treatments. Particular attention is also given to the term 'motility' which is used in the majority of diagnoses of children.

The conclusion drawn is that large differences exist between the approaches and visions of various authors, yet there are no clearly described guidelines regarding the diagnosis and treatment of adults and children in the visceral area. There are also no clear distinctions in the literature and publications concerning visceral osteopathy and described treatments for children.

However, from results of the literature study on articles based on definitions of osteopathy, it can be clearly concluded that visceral osteopathy for children has a preventative and therapeutic added value. In particular, the early infant years are of crucial importance.

A large potential field of opportunity seems to exist for the treatment of children from a visceral osteopathic approach. The importance of consensus among authorities concerning guidelines in this area is paramount for treatment effectiveness, guaranteeing safety and for re-enforcing the scientific basis of osteopathy.

