

**Koes, et al. A Randomized Clinical Trial of Manual Therapy and Physiotherapy for Persistent Back and Neck Complaints: Subgroup Analysis and Relationship Between Outcome Measures. Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics; 16:211-219; 1993.**

**Objective:** To compare physiotherapy to manual therapy.

**Background:** Physiotherapy and manual therapy are 2 widely used treatments in patients with back disorders. Physiotherapy consists of exercise, massage, and physical treatment modalities. Manual therapy is the application of passive movements to joints to restore the function of the spine. The effects of these two forms of treatments were studied in patients with persistent back and neck complaints and the correlation between outcome measures was determined in a randomized, clinical trial.

**Design:** RCT. 256 patients with non-specific back and neck pain of 6 weeks' duration or longer who had received no manual therapy or physiotherapy in the preceding 2 years. Treatment provided by manual therapists, physiotherapists, and general practitioners. GPs prescribed analgesics, instructed the patients about posture, exercise, and rest. Placebo group given detuned shortwave diathermy and ultrasound.

**Results:** Greater improvement in the main complaint was associated with manual therapy than with physiotherapy for patients with back problems of 1 year's duration or longer. For patients younger than age 40 years, improvement was also greater with manual therapy than with physiotherapy.

**Conclusion:** Manual therapy appears to yield better results than physiotherapy in patients with chronic conditions, and in patients younger than age 40 years.