

THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN STRESS-RELATED DYSAUTONOMIA AND CHANGING DISEASE PATTERNS: IMPLICATIONS FOR MANUAL THERAPISTS

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Introduction

In today's fast-paced world, stress has become an omnipresent companion for many. From hectic work schedules to personal responsibilities, the pressures of modern life can take a toll on both our mental and physical well-being. For manual therapists (physiotherapists, osteopaths, fascia and craniosacral therapists...) understanding the intricate relationship between stress-related dysautonomia and its connection to evolving disease patterns is essential. This article delves into the significance of this interplay, particularly concerning patients with musculoskeletal pain, highlighting why mechanistic therapy modalities might fall short in such cases.

Stress-Related Dysautonomia: Unraveling the Connection

Stress, that omnipresent force, has a profound impact on our bodies, and at the heart of its effects lies the autonomic nervous system. Chronic stress, characterised by an imbalance in the autonomic nervous system, can result in stress-related dysautonomia (SRD). SRD is the condition where the sympathetic nervous system, responsible for the fight-or-flight response, is in a state of over-activation, while the parasympathetic nervous system, governing rest and relaxation, is permanently under-activated. This imbalance manifests in symptoms such as musculoskeletal pain to headaches or migraines, lack of energy, sleep disturbances, stomach or bowel problems, cardiovascular disease, mood swings, cognitive impairment, brain fog, depression, anxiety, etc.

The Changing Landscape of Disease Patterns

Disease patterns are not static; they evolve over time due to a complex interplay of factors including lifestyle changes, societal stressors, and environmental shifts. Stress, a potent contributor to many health issues, including dysautonomia, weakens the immune system and triggers inflammation. Chronic stress can

thus contribute to the development or exacerbation of conditions ranging from cardiovascular diseases to autoimmune disorders and mental health problems. As these disease patterns change, manual therapists must be prepared to adapt their approaches to effectively address emerging health concerns.

The Manual Therapist's Role in Stress-Related Musculoskeletal Pain

The influence of stress-related dysautonomia is an emerging phenomenon that is increasingly prevalent as a primary contributor to a.o. musculoskeletal pain in patients. These individuals may exhibit pain that mirrors typical musculoskeletal discomfort, yet it defies conventional treatment approaches.

The intricacies of this challenge arise from the intricate interplay between their musculoskeletal system and the autonomic nervous system's involved in the bodies stress response.

Why Mechanistic Therapy Modalities Fall Short

Traditional mechanistic therapy modalities, which primarily focus on the biomechanical aspects of pain, might not yield optimal results for patients with stress-related musculoskeletal

pain. This disconnect arises because these modalities fail to address the underlying dysautonomia-driven component of the pain.

Approaches that solely target the physical symptoms without considering the role of the autonomic nervous system are likely to provide only temporary relief and often fall short in the long term.

The Holistic Approach: Bridging the Gap

A revolution in the evolution of manual therapy is needed to address this emerging phenomenon. Manual therapists need to become well-versed in a more body-centred stress coaching approach. To stay relevant they need to take themselves and their skills to the next level to offer the best care for their patients and their professional reputation. Recognising the influence of stress on the autonomic nervous system and subsequently on pain perception allows manual therapists to provide the evolving care this fast-changing world needs with a more integrative approach to well-being. In other words a manual therapist needs to evolve with their time to empower patients to flourish and thrive and navigate the challenges of life by addressing both the symptom and its origin.

Are you a manual therapist ready to take yourself and your skills to the next level? Visit www.thereasetapproach.com and register for one of the upcoming workshops, or reach out to thereasetapproach@gmail.com for more information or to suggest a workshop location near you.

Your journey towards a more impactful and fulfilling practice begins today.

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Conclusion

The shifting landscape of disease patterns underscores the critical need for a profound grasp of stress-related dysautonomia, especially within the realm of musculoskeletal pain. Manual therapists who demonstrate a heartfelt dedication to their patients and possess the necessary tools are positioned as key influencers in the trajectory of future health and wellness. By incorporating a targeted therapeutic approach capable of resetting the autonomic nervous system into their practice, they hold the potential to catalyse flourishing and resilience in an ever-evolving world.

Yet, the magnitude of their influence hinges intrinsically on their openness to embracing a forward-thinking approach to their practice, one that aligns with the currents of change and adaptation.

In summary, the evolving dynamics of health and stress demand a holistic comprehension of stress-related dysautonomia, primarily concerning musculoskeletal pain. Manual therapists, armed with both genuine dedication and specialised tools, can emerge as beacons of better health and vitality in an ever-shifting landscape. The true measure of their impact lies in their willingness to pioneer a futurized approach within their practice.