



Council
20 May 2021
National Council for Osteopathic Research: concerns and complaints report
2013-2019

Classification	Public
Purpose	For decision
Issue	Council is asked to agree to the publication of the National Council for Osteopathic Research (NCOR) report into the type of concerns and complaints raised about osteopaths and osteopathic services in 2013 to 2019.
Recommendation(s)	1. To agree to the publication of the NCOR concerns and complaints report 2013-2019.
Financial and resourcing implications	The cost of compiling the report is £1,100 and is covered within the budgets approved annually by Council.
Equality and diversity implications	The report provides information related to equality, diversity and inclusion matters.
Communications implications	If Council agree to the publication of the report, we will issue a news article, publish the report on our website and undertake social media activity which will include a short video from Dr Dawn Carnes, NCOR Director.
Annex(es)	A. Report: Types of concerns and complaints raised about osteopaths and osteopathic services in 2013 to 2019
Author	Matthew Redford

Key messages from paper:

- Every year the National Council for Osteopathic Research (NCOR) produce a report on the type of concerns and complaints made against osteopaths and osteopathic services. The report for 2013-2019 is annexed to this paper.
- The report brings together concerns and complaint data from the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC), the Institute of Osteopathy (iO) and three insurers of osteopaths.
- The report highlights include:
 - Over the last seven years the overall number of concerns and complaints have dropped.
 - Osteopaths with less than two years or less experience are least likely to be complained about.
 - Men are more likely to be complained about than women.
 - Communication concerns and complaints were slightly higher than the previous six year mean; the direction in the number of clinical care concerns and complaints is considered encouraging.
 - Concerns and complaints about sexual impropriety was the highest ever recorded compared to the previous six year mean.
- The report was delayed due to the impact of the pandemic; however, it is now ready for publication if approved by Council.

Background

1. Every year the National Council for Osteopathic Research (NCOR) produce a report on the type of concerns and complaints made against osteopaths and osteopathic services. The report for 2013-2019 is annexed to this paper.
2. Collection of the data was impacted in 2020 due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and there were also delays in the sign-off of the report from the GOsC Executive, again due to the impact of the pandemic.
3. Collection of the concerns and complaint data for 2020 is already underway.

Discussion

NCOR Report 2013-2019: key findings

4. The NCOR Report - which is annexed to this paper - sets out a number of key findings. These are provided below for ease of reference:
 - Over the last seven years the overall number of concerns and complaints have dropped.

- Osteopaths with 2 years or less experience are least likely to be complained about (0.9%) compared with 2.25% of osteopaths with between 3 – 10 years' experience and 2.2% with more than 10 years' experience.
 - Men are more likely to be complained about than women.
 - The direction in the number of clinical care concerns and complaints is encouraging. Safety in clinical practice in 2019 were the lowest ever recorded at 51 (mean 2013-2018 = 81.5 (range 54-115). Quality of clinical practice in 2019 were lower than the last 6 year mean at 19 (mean 2013-2018 = 21.8 (range 17-32).
 - In respect of management issues, concerns and complaints about the clinical environment were above average in 2019 at 8 (mean 2013-2018 5.5 (range 2-9)) this was due in particular to concerns and complaints about value for money.
 - Communication concerns and complaints were slightly higher than the previous 6 year mean 42 in 2019 vs 39 as the 6 year mean (range 28-49).
 - Regulation specific issues were the most notable, the previous 4 years of data average number of concerns were 12.5 in 2019 this figure rose to 34 due to the increase in complaints made about osteopaths bringing the profession into disrepute.
 - Standards with regards to relations issues and respecting patient rights are, over-all, fairly consistent but in 2019 there was 17 concerns and complaints about sexual impropriety compared to the previous 6 year mean of 11.5 (range 7-14), this is the most ever recorded.
 - The remaining data is consistent with other years.
5. The Report also highlights three potential new areas of investigation being:

Feedback from those who make complaints: Some qualitative investigation about the complainants experience prior to the complaint or concern being raised and how these were managed subsequently. Patient safety can be considered in terms of physical and physiological safety but also the psychological repercussions of any unwanted, unexpected or traumatic (perceived or actual). It may resonate with practitioners to understand the consequences of their behaviours and actions on their patients and give value to adopting behaviour changes in their osteopathic practice and care.

Targeted CPD for those with over 10 years' experience: The areas that may be useful to address in terms of training to enhance skills centre on the 'softer' competencies that are more difficult to educate and embed in everyday practice. These include:

- Communication skills (both verbal and non-verbal)
- Self-reflection: Learning from mistakes and self-awareness (positive reflection for better practice)
- Managing patient expectations
- Professionalism practice and what this means in reality and how to be 'professional'

Rigour of classification and future data collection: The original aim of this project was to gain insight and understanding into the nature and type of all concerns and complaints, not just those that are escalated to investigation, thus enabling practitioners to avoid and prevent problems. This project has succeeded in documenting the nature and type of concerns to inform the profession.

The reliability and validity of the classification coding is yet to be determined, this needs testing and verifying so that training can be given, where necessary, to those coding to ensure inter-organisation consistency.

We are not in a position to determine whether any changes in the nature and type of concerns and complaints are as a result of any of the recent profession wide interventions, as there are many confounding variables that may affect the data. We could however explore and study the impact of using the concerns and complaints data further by using innovative research methodologies such as action research. This is where recipients of information or newly implemented interventions can be monitored over time and behaviours and or any behaviour changes are assessed and the impact on patient care and outcomes is evaluated.

Publishing the report and promoting it to the profession

6. Council is presented with the NCOR Report and will be asked to approve the report for publication. On the basis that Council provides that authority, the Executive intend to publish the report on website alongside a news article bringing it to the attention of the profession.
7. We would also undertake social media activity which will feature a short video from Dr Dawn Carnes who will present the key findings and headlines for the profession.

Recommendation: To agree to the publication of the NCOR concerns and complaints report 2013-2019.