



Osteopathic Practice Committee

27 February 2014

Common Classification System for recording and monitoring claims and complaints about osteopaths

Classification	Public
Purpose	For noting
Issue	The paper updates the Committee on the Common Classification System that aims to collect and link data relating to claims and complaints about osteopaths, in order to identify and monitor trends on an annual basis.
Recommendation	To note the content of this paper
Financial and resourcing implications	Staff resources are accounted for in the current budget. As this has been an experimental year and the project is still developing, the GOsC has offered to pay in full this year's costs for the NCOR data analysis work. This is on the basis that in future costs will be shared by all the participating organisations.
Equality and diversity implications	None arising from this paper
Communications implications	None arising from this paper
Annexes	None
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Background

1. The General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) funded four interlinked research projects designed to gain a better understanding of any potential risk that may be associated with osteopathic care. These are known as the NCOR Adverse Events Projects.
2. One of these projects (NCOR Adverse Events Project No. 3¹), which reported in October 2011, examined the nature and frequency of complaints and insurance claims made about osteopaths between 2004 and 2008. The research team was given access to complaints and claims data and contextual information held by the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC), the British Osteopathic Association (BOA), and four osteopathic professional indemnity insurance providers: Balens; Howden; Three Counties; and Townergate Medical Insurance Agency.
3. The final report advocated the systematic monitoring of complaints and claims relating to osteopathic practice, in order to better understand and address the issues and circumstances that give rise to concerns and complaints about osteopaths. To this end, it recommended that the organisations who receive these complaints – specifically the GOsC, the BOA and osteopathic indemnity insurance providers – adopt a common system for classifying and recording complaints and claims about osteopaths.
4. A project initiation meeting on 15 October 2012 confirmed 'in principle' agreement to the adoption of a common system for classifying and coding claims and complaints about osteopaths, with a view to data pooling and the identification and monitoring of trends.
5. The meeting established a working group to develop the joint initiative, comprising:
 - Balens Insurance Brokers
 - Giles Insurance Brokers
 - Howdens Insurance Brokers
 - Locktons Insurance Group
 - LFC insurance
 - Three Counties Insurance
 - Townergate Medical Insurance Agency
 - The British Osteopathic Association
 - The General Osteopathic Council.

¹ Complaints and claims against osteopaths: a baseline study of the frequency of complaints 2004-2008 and a qualitative exploration of patients' complaints. NCOR Adverse Events Project No. 3 – the CONDOR study. Leach J, Fiske A, Mullinger B, Ives R, Mandy A. October 2011. See GOsC website at http://www.osteopathy.org.uk/uploads/complaints_and_claims_against_osteopaths_2004-2008_public.pdf

6. The primary aim was agreed by all parties to identify aspects of osteopathic practice that generate most complaints or claims, to inform education, training and guidance, and thereby potentially to reduce the number of complaints and claims.
7. A second meeting of the working group on 6 December 2012 considered and agreed a Common Classification System for claims and complaints about osteopaths.
8. Participating organisations began recording complaints and claims using the Common Classification System from 1 January 2013. In order to capture the full picture of the circumstances that provoke complaints/claims, participating organisations have been recording the allegations made in both informal and formal complaints and claims. Data is recorded once only, at the point when a complaint/claim is first received, to avoid data duplication when an informal concern evolves into a formal complaint
9. A review meeting was held on 29 April 2013 to assess the need for any adaptations to the data collection system. It was also agreed that participating organisations will submit their data to the National Council for Osteopathic Research (NCOR) who have been commissioned to undertake the data analysis.

Data analysis

10. Participating organisations have now submitted their data collected between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2013 directly to NCOR. The combined data will be analysed by NCOR during February and March 2014, to produce an annual report for the participating organisations by April 2014. The annual report will include:
 - a. Overall frequencies of classification category
 - b. Frequencies of classification category by month over the year (if dates provided)
 - c. Trend curves over time (where historical data exists, but certainly year on year)
 - d. Possibly comparator statistics published by other professions.

Costs

11. As this has been an experimental year and the project is still developing, the GOsC has offered to pay in full this year's costs for the NCOR data analysis work. This is on the basis that in future costs for the data analysis work will be shared by all the participating organisations. Ownership of NCOR reports will lie with all participating organisations.

Next steps

12. A review of the categories currently applied in the Common Classification System and the type and method of data collection will be reviewed by the participating organisations.
13. The results of NCOR's analysis of the combined data will also be reviewed by the participating organisations, who will consider how to disseminate the information to ensure that educational aim is achieved.

Recommendation: to note the contents of this paper.