

Osteopathy and Exotics – Thinking outside of the box

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*All aspects of osteopathic care
for people, animals & birds*

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Background

- Qualified in 1988 from the ESO
- From 1990 applied osteopathy to exotics
- Initial cases were native British wildlife
- Exotic pets
- Captive species in zoo's and safari parks

Introduction

- Unique problems associated with exotics
- Safety, zoonosis, working knowledge of anatomy and physiology
- Ability to apply osteopathic principles to different species
- No research data to refer to for guidance

Objectives

- Take two very different species that present obstacles to osteopathic treatment
- Create clinically replicable systems for treating with osteopathy
- Improve the health and potential welfare of these species
- European Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)
- Herman's Tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*)

Methods

- Create treatment protocols
- Avoid triggering defensive actions
- Maximise limited anatomical access for treatment
- Only using techniques that were easy to replicate
- Measuring success using collated data¹

The subjects



Results - Hedgehogs

- 10 Hedgehogs
- Single limb amputees
- 3 osteopathic treatments each at weekly intervals
- All were fit for release with a more balanced gait 2 weeks earlier than previous untreated cases²

Hedgehog skeleton



Examination



Examination



Blending examination with treatment



Ability to curl up



Curled up



Using Functional release



Taking it to point of release



Assessing post treatment









Results - Tortoises

- 3 Tortoise
- Asymmetric gait patterns
- No known pathology
- 4 osteopathic tx at 2 week intervals
- 2 had normal gaits at end of trial
- 1 improved but gait still asymmetric

A Functional approach



Using all of the limbs



Tail



Passive work to cervicals



Active stretching



Hind limb traction



Active stretch/load bearing







Conclusions

- Limited access does not preclude osteopathy
- Osteopathic principles work on mammals as well as reptiles
- By using certain modalities treatment results are similar to those for cats and dogs³
- More evidence based research needs to be done

References

- ¹British Wildlife Rehabilitation Council data base from UK wildlife hospitals. Available from <http://www.bwrc.org.uk>
- ²British Hedgehog Preservation Society data base. Available from <http://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk>
- ³Lockwood K. (2010) An over view of all of the under graduate studies in the osteopathic care of animals at UK OEI's. Society of Osteopaths in Animal Practice. Available from <http://www.uksoap.org.uk>