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Contact: Ron Precht

847-905-1649

Latest Science Indicates Massage Therapy Can Be Effective for Pain, Fatigue & Anxiety

Triannual International Massage Therapy Research Conference to Confirm What Consumers Know from Experience

Evanston, IL. May, 7, 2019 – Emerging research on massage therapy continues to expand knowledge of its benefits for a variety of health conditions, according to the [American Massage Therapy Association \(AMTA\)](#). Recent studies reinforce evidence for the efficacy of massage therapy for pain, fatigue and anxiety, which millions of Americans are experiencing.

“With so many people living with chronic pain, it’s important for consumers to know how research is confirming the impact they have seen massage therapy can have on their health,” says AMTA President Christopher Deery in advance of the triannual International Massage Therapy Research Conference being held in Alexandria, Virginia later this week. “AMTA is committed to advancing research-informed massage therapy practice that is in the best interests of the health of our country.”

Massage is now a valuable component of treatments for pain after breast cancer surgery and cancer-related fatigue, as well as for low back pain and arthritis pain. One study supported by grants from the National Institutes of Health showed substantial improvements in pain, mobility, and overall health among intervention participants after breast cancer surgery. Myofascial massage significantly reduced self-reported pain and mobility limitations. Myofascial massage also resulted in significant improvements in self-reported overall health.¹

Another study of cancer patients concluded that six weeks of weekly Swedish massage therapy produced a significant reduction in fatigue among breast cancer survivors who had received surgery, radiation and/or chemotherapy.²

Other recent studies have focused on massage therapy for chronic low back pain and arthritis pain. The Kentucky Pain Research and Outcomes Study evaluated the impact of massage on pain, disability, and health-related quality of life for primary care patients with chronic low back pain. The study found clinical improvement after 12 weeks of massage therapy.³ A systematic review of seven research studies on massage therapy for patients with arthritis indicated that massage therapy is superior to non-active therapies in reducing pain and improving certain functional outcomes.⁴

In a July 2018 national survey, 31 percent of adult Americans indicated they had received a massage from a massage therapist in the previous five years. Of those, who had a massage in the previous 12 months, 67 percent of those surveyed claimed the primary reason for receiving their last massage was medical (41 percent) or stress (26 percent) related.⁵

This and related research will be presented this week at the Massage Therapy Foundation's International Massage Therapy Research Conference May 9-10 in Alexandria, Virginia.

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Find a Massage Therapist Near You

Individuals should consult with a qualified, professional massage therapist to determine the best massage therapy approach for their specific needs. American Massage Therapy Association massage therapists meet or exceed state education requirements, ascribe to a code of ethics and participate in continuing education. They can create specialized massage approaches based on individual conditions, fitness and goals.

To find a massage therapist near you, AMTA offers a free professional massage therapist locator service at www.findamassagetherapist.org.

About The American Massage Therapy Association

The American Massage Therapy Association, the most trusted name in massage therapy, with 90,000+ members, is the largest non-profit, professional association serving massage therapists, massage students and massage schools. AMTA works to advance the profession through ethics and standards, the promotion of fair and consistent licensing of massage therapists in all states, and public education on the benefits of massage. www.amtamassage.org

International Massage Therapy Research Conference

The International Massage Therapy Research Conference (IMTRC) is held tri-annually by the Massage Therapy Foundation. IMTRC brings together an engaged community of massage therapists, health care thought leaders and educators to discuss massage therapy research and how to advance research-informed massage therapy practice.

References

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2. Kinkead B, Schettler PJ, Larson ER, Carroll D, Sharenko M, Nettles J, Edwards SA, Miller AH, Torres MA, Dunlop BW, Rakofsky JJ, Rapaport MH. Massage therapy decreases cancer-related fatigue: Results from a randomized early phase trial. [Cancer](#). 2018 Feb 1;124(3):546-554.
3. Elder WG, Munk N, Love MM, Bruckner GG, Stewart KE, Pearce K. Real-World Massage Therapy Produces Meaningful Effectiveness Signal for Primary Care Patients with Chronic Low Back Pain: Results of a Repeated Measures Cohort Study. [Pain Med](#). 2017 Jul 1;18(7):1394-1405
4. Nelson NL, Churilla JR. Massage Therapy for Pain and Function in Patients With Arthritis: A Systematic Review of Randomized Controlled Trials. [Am J Phys Med Rehabil](#). 2017 Sep;96(9):665-672.
5. AMTA's 22nd annual [consumer survey](#) conducted by ORC International. This report presents the findings of a telephone survey conducted among two national probability samples, which, when combined, consists of 1,001 adults, 504 men and 497 women 18 years of age and older, living in the continental United States and completed on July 12-15, 2018.