

PLACEBO project

PLACEBO is a study dedicated to investigating the placebo effect in manual medicine, including osteopathy. The placebo effect refers to a phenomenon in which an apparently inert or therapeutically inactive treatment improves the patient's condition simply through the positive expectations associated with the treatment.

In manual medicine, such as osteopathy, touch and the therapeutic relationship play a fundamental role in the interaction between the practitioner and the patient. The placebo effect can therefore be particularly relevant in these practices, as expectations, trust, and the quality of the relationship between the patient and the therapist can influence the therapeutic response.

The PLACEBO study aims to thoroughly understand the placebo effect in manual medicine, exploring its mechanisms, clinical relevance, and implications for therapeutic practice. Through a combination of clinical studies, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses, PLACEBO seeks to provide a solid scientific foundation to understand how the placebo effect influences the outcomes of manual treatments.

One of PLACEBO's objectives is to identify the factors that can amplify or mitigate the placebo effect in manual medicine. For example, it might evaluate how patient expectations, the therapist's personality, the treatment context, and effective communication can influence the therapeutic response and the placebo effect. Additionally, individual differences in susceptibility to the placebo effect may be explored to personalise treatment strategies and maximise positive outcomes.

PLACEBO also contributes to improving the understanding of the interactions between the placebo effect and underlying biological mechanisms. For instance, neurophysiological changes, such as autonomic nervous system responses, modifications in brain activity, and neuroendocrine reactions, which may be involved in the placebo effect in manual medicine, could be investigated.

The PLACEBO study aims to ethically and consciously integrate the placebo effect into the clinical practice of manual medicine. This may involve promoting effective communication with the patient, managing expectations, optimising the therapeutic context, and adopting approaches that ethically maximise the placebo effect without diminishing the importance of the specific treatment effects.

In conclusion, the PLACEBO study is a significant effort to understand the placebo effect in manual medicine, such as osteopathy. Scientific research seeks to identify the mechanisms, influencing factors, and clinical implications of the placebo effect, aiming to improve therapeutic practice, personalise treatments, and optimise outcomes for patients benefiting from these manual therapies.