

**Nourbakhsh MR, Fearon FJ. The Effect of Oscillating-energy Manual Therapy on lateral Epicondylitis: A Randomized, Placebo-control, Double-blinded Study. J Hand Ther 2008;21:4-13.**

Design: Randomized clinical trial

Brief summary of study:

- 23 patients (14 men, 9 women, mean age 52) with clinical diagnosis of lateral epicondylitis were treated at a university physical therapy department in Georgia
- Randomized to Oscillating Energy Manual Therapy (OEMT, n=11) or sham OEMT (n=12)
- OEMT consisted of gentle oscillating pressure with one of the treating therapist's hands on one side of the tender point of the lateral epicondyle and the other hand on the opposite side of the medial side of the elbow
- Sham OEMT consisted of placement of therapist's hands away from the tender point of the epicondyle with oscillation imparted to the nonaffected areas of the elbow
- Both groups had six treatment sessions over a 2 to 3 week period of time
- After treatment ended, a therapist unaware of treatment assignment measured grip strength, pain intensity, and assessment of activity limitation
- The active OEMT, but not the sham OEMT patients, had improvements in pain, strength, and function between the pre and post-treatment evaluations
- The active OEMT group was contacted for follow-up at 6 months; 10 of the 11 patients maintained their improved function and 8 of 11 remained pain-free

Authors' conclusions:

-OEMT demonstrates improvements in pain intensity, grip strength, and elbow function, and could be an effective alternative treatment for lateral epicondylitis

Comments:

- Only the active OEMT group had a 6 month follow-up assessment
- E-mail response by the lead author states that all of the sham group received active OEMT and that no follow-up measurements were possible for that group

Assessment: Inadequate (measuring 6 month follow-up in only the active OEMT group makes comparison with placebo impossible)

No evidence statement can be justified; OEMT may be an option but cannot be recommended on the basis of evidence