Cranial Manipulation: Theory and Practice - Osseous and Soft Tissue Approaches

Book Review by Steven Lavitan, DC, LAc

By Steven Lavitan

Title: Cranial Manipulation: Theory and Practice Osseous and Soft Tissue Approaches
Author: Leon Chaitow
Publisher: Elsevier
Price: $52.95
Part #: T-233

Cranial technique is extremely controversial; in fact, many chiropractors either ignore it or deny its existence altogether.

In this treatise, readers are presented with basic research showing its anatomy and physiology. When one juxtaposes this research with certain therapeutic claims, inconsistencies emerge. The resulting explanations can sometimes be comical. My favorite is a tautology by the osteopath Dr. Jones, who stated that his results "proved his technique."

This book contains extensive references to Upledger’s positions and discussions about many basic craniopathic techniques and assorted forms of muscle work. There is even mention of the corkscrew technique utilized by trigger-point practitioner Raymond Nimmo. Additionally, cranial positional release work; Jones stress points; Barnes myofascial release techniques; and every other neuromuscular technique imaginable are discussed.

This work is an attempt to provide a global view of cranial work; in that regard, it is the most complete scientific review of cranial research I have seen to date. The author catalogued both the basic sciences and the cranial therapies in a thorough fashion, and to his credit, he also admits when they are irreconcilable.

From an osteopathic standpoint, this book is fairly inclusive; however, as a chiropractor and student of craniopathy for 30 years, I did find some weaknesses. Either the author misinterpreted some of DeJarnette’s
work or just chose to ignore it. He lumped it with Goodheart as primarily a form of therapy localization (which may not be fair to Goodheart, either). Although DeJarnette did work with muscle testing, it was a divergence from the main body of his work. Little mention of other chiropractic researchers is made, and there is no mention of Boyd’s Bio Cranial Therapy. Boyd is a British osteopath who has exerted a powerful influence in craniopathic circles among North American chiropractors. Despite these shortcomings, this book offers an excellent overview for beginning cranial practitioners with chiropractic backgrounds. All things considered, the publication rates a 9.5, with my only reservation being the short and basically incorrect treatment DeJarnette’s work was afforded, and the complete omission of Boyd’s work.

This manual fills an important void in the existing literature for an advanced craniopath, especially concerning the new research being done at New York College of Osteopathy. Using needles placed in sutures and advanced imaging techniques, whole new vistas of research have emerged. Ultimately, this book may not answer the central question of whether craniopathy can be fully rationalized based on the basic sciences, but it frames the discussion quite well.

Dr. Lavitan’s rating:

[IMAGE] 9.5 out of 10

If you have authored, published or produced a book, audio or video package that is chiropractic-oriented, educational, nonpromotional and written or produced in a professional manner, and would like it reviewed in Dynamic Chiropractic, please send two copies of the book, video or audiocassette to:

Review Editor
Dynamic Chiropractic
P.O. Box 4109
Huntington Beach, California 92605-4109

Items submitted for review will not be returned.