Manual therapy for unsettled, distressed and excessively crying infants: a systematic review and meta-analyses.
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**Aim:** To conduct a systematic review and meta-analyses to assess the effect of manual therapy interventions for healthy but unsettled, distressed and excessively crying infants, to provide information to help clinicians and parents inform decisions about care.

**Methods:** We reviewed published peer-reviewed articles in the last 26 years from 9 databases. Our inclusion criteria were: manual therapy (by regulated or registered professionals) of unsettled, distressed and excessively crying infants who were otherwise healthy and treated in a primary care setting. Outcomes of interest were: crying, feeding, sleep, parent-child relations, parent experience/satisfaction and parent-reported global change.

**Results:** Nineteen studies were selected for full review: 7 randomised controlled trials, 7 case series, 3 cohort studies, 1 service evaluation study and 1 qualitative study.

**Conclusions:** Some small benefits were found but whether these are meaningful to parents remains unclear as does the mechanisms of action. Manual therapy appears relatively safe.

Results (cont.): We found moderate strength favourable evidence for the effectiveness of manual therapy on: reduction in crying time -1.27 hours per day (95% CI -2.19, -0.36). Evidence for sleep was inconclusive; parent-child relations, inconclusive; and global improvement, no effect.

Reported adverse events was low: 7 non-serious events per 1,000 infants exposed to manual therapy (n= 1308) and 110 per 1,000 in those not exposed.