



Osteopathic International Alliance



2025

Executive Summary

FOREWARD

Osteopathy and osteopathic medicine are growing in popularity in many countries around the world and are meeting the healthcare needs of an ever-increasing number of patients. This growth is the result of constant improvements in training and the quality of care provided, bringing the public and practitioners together around a unique therapeutic approach. As a result of this vitality, the profession is gaining regulation in an increasing number of countries.

The OIA works tirelessly to promote this movement towards quality and is proud of the positive momentum of our profession. However, it is essential to be able to demonstrate its vitality with robust data, both to the public and to public health decision-makers. This is the purpose of the 2025 five-year report on the status of the global osteopathic profession.

This report was completed as a part of the Osteopathic International Alliance's [2024-2026 Collaborative Plan](#) with the World Health Organization (WHO). As a non-State actor in official relations with the WHO since February 2018, the OIA continues to promote and document the commitment of the osteopathic profession to providing quality healthcare to patients across the globe.

This survey provides a current view of the profession and its growth since the last global survey in 2020 and demonstrates greater acknowledgment and acceptance of both osteopathy and osteopathic medicine throughout the world. Additionally, the evidence for effectiveness of osteopathy and osteopathic medicine is growing and becoming more robust.

The OIA Board appreciates and recognizes the integral contributions of OIA member organizations to the data gathering process. The Chair is grateful to the OIA Board for its vision and diligent work in editing the document. Special thanks also go out to the following individuals:

Professor Dawn Carnes, Project Manager, United Kingdom

Mr Charles Hunt, Past Chair, OIA Board, and Global Survey Task Force Chair, United Kingdom

Ms Ana Paula Ferreira, Past Chair, OIA Board, and Global Survey Task Force Member, Brazil

Dr Frank Mueller, Global Survey Task Force Member, Germany

Dr Kendi Hensel, Chair-elect, OIA Board, and Global Survey Task Force Member, United States

Ms Raine Richards, Secretariat, OIA, United States

The OIA Board of Directors is proud to submit this report to the World Health Organization in support of its strategic priorities, outcomes, and general program of work. We are also pleased to share this document with our member organizations to advance the global osteopathic profession and to advocate for high-quality osteopathic healthcare worldwide.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ph. Sterlingot', written over a horizontal line.

Mr. Philippe Sterlingot, DO
Chair, OIA Board of Directors

GLOBAL REVIEW OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE AND OSTEOPATHY 2025

Executive Summary

This report presents the current status of osteopathic medicine and osteopathy worldwide. It is intended to inform policy makers, commissioners, professional bodies, educators, clinicians, students, patients and the public. The data reflects global trends in workforce, education, regulation, and clinical practice, and highlights the growing contribution of osteopathic care to international health systems.

Data were collected from member organisations of the Osteopathic International Alliance and where possible from other non-member organisations representing their countries.

Professional Definitions

Osteopathic healthcare is based on a perception of the body as an integrated whole. It is a 'person-centered' rather than 'disease-centered' approach to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illness and injury.

- **Osteopathic Physicians** are licensed medical doctors trained in osteopathic medicine, including pharmaceutical, surgical, and manual approaches.
- **Osteopaths** are statutorily or voluntarily registered healthcare practitioners trained to deliver osteopathy. Osteopaths use a range of techniques including 'hands-on' manual techniques for assessment and diagnosis to identify and then treat various health conditions, including musculoskeletal structural problems that influence the body's physiology, including the nervous system, circulation, and internal organs.

Professional Definitions GLOBAL WORKFORCE (2025)

Osteopathic Physicians:

ESTIMATED

171,573

REGISTERED PRACTITIONERS

WORKING IN

21

COUNTRIES

45.9%

INCREASE SINCE 2020

AUTHORIZED TO PRACTICE IN

57

COUNTRIES

Osteopaths:

ESTIMATED

89,293

REGISTERED PRACTITIONERS

WORKING IN

35

COUNTRIES

12.6%

INCREASE SINCE 2020

LEGAL PRACTICE PERMITTED IN

31

COUNTRIES

RECOGNIZED
AS A HEALTH
PROFESSION IN

16

COUNTRIES

TITLE PROTECTED
AND REGULATED
BY STATUTE IN

15

COUNTRIES

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Osteopathic Physicians:

74

TRAINING INSTITUTIONS GLOBALLY
(AROUND 52 IN 2020)

44

LOCATED IN THE UNITED STATES
(IN 2020 THERE WERE 38)

PROGRAMS RANGE FROM UNDERGRADUATE
MEDICAL DEGREES TO POSTGRADUATE
OSTEOPATHIC TRAINING

Osteopaths:

124

TRAINING INSTITUTIONS ACROSS

22

COUNTRIES

(AROUND 100 IN 20 COUNTRIES IN 2020)

QUALIFICATIONS RANGE FROM DIPLOMAS
TO MASTER'S LEVEL

(LEVEL 7)

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
REQUIREMENTS VARY BY REGULATORY STATUS

CLINICAL PRACTICE

Osteopathic Physicians:

DELIVER CARE ACROSS ALL
MEDICAL SPECIALTIES

OVER

60%

WORK IN THE PRIVATE
HEALTHCARE SECTOR

Osteopaths:

PRIMARILY TREAT SPINAL AND
MUSCULOSKELETAL CONDITIONS

OVER

60%

WORK IN PRIVATE PRACTICE

OSTEOPATHIC CARE IS INCLUDED IN
STATE-FUNDED HEALTHCARE IN

8

COUNTRIES

EVIDENCE AND SAFETY

Osteopathic Physicians:

SCOPE INCLUDES
**PHARMACEUTICAL, SURGICAL, AND
CONSERVATIVE CARE**

EFFECTIVENESS AND SAFETY ARE SUPPORTED
BY **CONDITION-SPECIFIC EVIDENCE**

CLINICIANS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR
MAINTAINING CURRENT KNOWLEDGE OF
THE EVIDENCE BASE

Osteopaths:

SCOPE IS LIMITED TO **MANUAL
THERAPY AND CONSERVATIVE CARE**

**POSITIVE EVIDENCE SUPPORTS
OSTEOPATHY** FOR MUSCULOSKELETAL
CONDITIONS SPECIFICALLY, STRONG
EVIDENCE FOR LOW BACK AND NECK PAIN

STRONG EVIDENCE CONFIRMS A LOW RISK
OF SERIOUS HARM ASSOCIATED WITH
MANUAL THERAPEUTIC TECHNIQUES

This summary reflects the continued growth, diversification, and integration of osteopathic care worldwide. The profession’s commitment to evidence-based practice and patient-centered care positions it as a valuable contributor to global health systems.

Visual Briefing: Global Osteopathic Snapshot (2025)

Domain	Osteopathic Physicians	Osteopaths
Workforce Size	172,000 (↑46% since 2020)	89,000 (↑12.6% since 2020)
Countries Practicing	57 authorized countries	31 countries with legal practice
Regulatory Status	Licensed medical doctors	Recognized in 16 countries; regulated in 15
Education	74 schools (44 in USA); medical + osteopathic in 10 countries	124 schools in 22 countries; diploma to MSc
Clinical Scope	All medical specialties; surgical, pharmaceutical + manual care	Manual therapy; Musculoskeletal focus
Sector	>60% private healthcare	>60% private practice
Public Provision	Varies by country	Included in 8 national health systems
Evidence Base	Broad scope; condition-specific	Strong for low back and neck pain; low risk profile