



Headache and Craniosacral Fascial Therapy (CFT)

The primary avenue of headache treatment through the medical model is with drugs; surgery is used only in the most desperate situations. Unfortunately, drugs can only manage the condition and not get at the root cause. The priority of CFT is to eliminate the cause of the condition to allow the body to return to its normal physiology. The Gillespie Approach has four main areas of care.

Craniosacral Therapy

The brain needs to breathe. The brain should maintain a very slow, smooth expansion and contraction cycle to be healthy. Because of the accumulation of traumas over the course of a lifetime from in utero to the present day, normal brain motion can gradually become restricted. The meninges and other tissues hold the trauma of various accidents and create an abnormal cranial pressure, which may be the primary cause of the head pain. The most likely problem area is the middle meningeal artery, tightly sandwiched between strained dura and hard cranial bones. Pressure here can cause head pain.

The goal of CFT is to relieve the strain in the dura, release the cranial pressure, restore normal physiology, and allow the head pain to go away on its own. Since the medical model believes that the cranial bones are fused, the brain must be immobile. When medical doctors become trapped in this model, they cannot address the real structural problem. Their only option is to dispense drugs, which manage the symptoms. Medication does not correct the problem and can only create long-term, toxic side effects.

Fascial Therapy

The fascial tissues connect all of our structures from head to toe as one unit. The craniosacral mechanism sits in this fascial web; they both function together as the craniosacral fascial system. If the fascia is loose in its natural state, the body can work freely. When physical trauma over the course of a lifetime imprints the fascial web, it can exert a pressure of up to 2,000 pounds per square inch on the craniosacral structures. This fascial pressure can severely restrict the motion of the brain and cause head and systemic body pain.

CFT seeks to relieve the strain in the web over a series of visits, allow the craniosacral mechanism to free up and work better, and return the body physiology to a more relaxed, healthy state. This is an optimal state for headache relief.

Muscle Therapy

The neck has many muscles layered on top of each other that are attached to the cranium. If these muscles start to become knotted and forcibly contract similar to the fascial strain above, the motion of the brain may restrict, and headaches can result. Muscle therapy can be an important part of treatment.

Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ) Therapies

If extensive craniosacral, fascial, and muscle therapies have been done on a headache client who is not improving, he is almost certainly clenching and/or grinding his teeth at night while he sleeps. Some clients do it during the day, unaware that they are in a clenched position while driving in traffic, for example. Clenching the teeth puts a tremendous amount of pressure on the cranium and almost invariably can restrict the brain motion.

The lateral pterygoid muscles are the key indicators for a TMJ problem. These two muscles open the jaw, and can be extremely sore for a person with a TMJ problem. The masseters, the primary jaw closing muscles, can also be knotted and sore for people who clench their teeth.

If someone becomes stressed for any reason, starts to clench his teeth, and headaches develop, the TMJ area can be important. The TMJ complex can turn the craniosacral fascial mechanism on and off. If a patient clenches her/his teeth, all of the craniosacral, fascial, and muscle work can be for naught.