

RCC Research Bulletin

Cost effectiveness of manual therapy

A systematic review of the cost-effectiveness of manual therapy for musculoskeletal pain, funded by the Royal College of Chiropractors, was recently published in the Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics. The conclusions of the review were positive for the cost-effectiveness of manual therapy approaches to management of low back and shoulder pain, but found inconsistent results for management of neck pain. The full article can be read [here](#).

Cost-effectiveness studies evaluate only the direct costs of provision of the care received and the review highlights some limitations in the available evidence, including the fact that more extensive economic evaluations (that would include the longer term costs and/or savings in healthcare) have not been conducted. Consequently the RCC recognises economic evaluation studies as one of the research priorities for chiropractic.

This study was part of the wide-ranging independent evaluation of manual therapy that the RCC commissioned to be conducted by Warwick Evidence, a research group that have been involved in clinical guideline development for NICE. An earlier publication in Chiropractic and Manual Therapies ([Clar et al, 2014](#)) reported some of the findings of their review of the clinical effectiveness of manual therapy approaches for different conditions. The full report produced by Warwick Evidence can be found here ([Sutcliffe et al, 2012](#)).