



craniosacral institute of michigan, llc

51850 Dequindre Rd Suite 1, Shelby Twp. MI 48316

(586) 991-0801

www.csiofmi.com

info@csiofmi.com

Anatomy of a Headache

Anatomy of A Headache A Craniosacral Perspective



Vanessa Cayle, MSPT has been a physical therapist since 1994. She is a Certified Instructor in Frequency Specific Microcurrent and an instructor of CST. She teaches and presents both locally and nationally. She is the owner and director of the CranioSacral Institute of MI, LLC.

According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) over 28 million of us suffer from diagnosed migraines, while a staggering 45 million struggle with chronic headaches. It is the most common complaint in our clinic, regardless of what other therapy related concerns the person may have. For those who have suffered this pain, it can be unrelenting, difficult to treat, and debilitating.

There are many factors that contribute or cause head pain. Typical treatment options include medications, diet changes, acupuncture, and relaxation or biofeedback. Yet there is another little known option...craniosacral therapy (cst). In order to understand why cst works to alleviate or eliminate head pain, we must first understand what this therapy is. Cst focuses on releasing restrictions in, and optimizing function of, the craniosacral system. The craniosacral system is the system of the cerebrospinal fluid (csf). This fluid flows around the brain and spinal cord, providing nutrients and eliminating waste products. It is important that this system works efficiently for the brain and spinal cord to work optimally. The therapist can assess bone movement to find areas of restriction. Once areas of concern are detected, there are gentle, very specific techniques to realign the system.

The goal of cst is to realign the craniosacral system by releasing the restrictions, thus enhancing the body's own ability to function and heal. Just as many experience pain when their back "is out", we may also experience pain when the bones of the cranium are out of alignment. There was much original thought that the cranial bones became fused in childhood and had no movement. In the late 1970's this debate was finally laid to rest with research from Michigan State University (Upledger, et al). Not only do the cranial bones move, but improving the movement and alignment of the bones has helped many individuals with their quest to eliminate or reduce headaches and migraines.

Many times, specific bones create specific issues based on their location and function. For instance, we find the most common bone related to headaches is the sphenoid bone. This bone lies in the middle of the base of the skull. On the back side of the bone, it rests in front of the brain stem that goes down to form the spinal cord. On the front aspect, it is a complex winged shape that connects to all the bones of the face, sinuses, ear bones, and mouth. We see pain generated in the sinuses, front of the head, side of the head, and the eye region. Treatments are very relaxing and gentle.

With treatment of head pain, I recommend finding a practitioner that is comfortable and well experienced in working with the bones of the mouth, what we in the field call "mouthwork". A website lists all practitioners trained in Upledger curriculum at www.iahp.com. While this is not the only curriculum, it is the most extensive database of practitioners. You may also contact the CranioSacral Institute of MI on their website at www.csiofmi.com to request a personal recommendation in your area.