**Classification of Diagnostic Tests used with Osteopathic Manipulation**

Abstract: In an effort to characterize methods and decision-making used in osteopathic manipulative

diagnosis, videotapes were made of a group of osteopathic physicians individually examining patients

who complained of pain considered to be related to musculoskeletal problems. The diagnostic tests

used fell into five classes: I—General impression; II—Regional motion testing; III—Position of landmarks;

IV—Superficial and deep tissue evaluation; and V—Local response to motion demand. The first three

classes are not unique to osteopathic diagnosis. Tests in classes IV and V, however, require high levels of

sensory skill and precise anatomic knowledge and are subject to considerable individuality in their

application by different physicians. Such differences are consistent with low levels of interexaminer

agreement on findings unless special care is taken to adopt detailed criteria for use of a test and for

interpretation and recording of findings. The differences may also explain why osteopathic physicians

when communicating with other medical professionals rely mainly upon findings obtained with the first

three classes of tests.

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