THE VALUE OF OSTEOPATHY IN A PROGRAM OF EARLY INTERVENTION
EXPERIENCE ABOUT 550 NEWBORNS FOLLOWED AT THE DESENZANO DEL GARDA HOSPITAL (ITALY)

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We present a 7 – years experience of the "Neurodevelopmental Follow up Service" in Desenzano del Garda Hospital (Italy), where osteopathy is included in a program of integrated early intervention.

BACKGROUND
Basic principles founding the program are:
- Early intervention is recommended for infants at increased risk for developmental disorders.
  The human brain development continues throughout childhood, in a continuous process of remodeling.
  Neural plasticity is more expressed in the first months of life, when adequate environmental stimuli are essential to promote motor and sensory development.
- Osteopathy is a manual therapy based on the evaluation and soft mobilizations of the muscle-skeleton and fascial systems.

The goal of osteopathic treatment is to improve posture and motor skills, which are the prerequisites for a balanced and harmonious development. Some studies support scientific value and safety of osteopathy for children, when is practiced by physicians skilled in pediatric osteopathy.

RESULTS
550 newborns were followed until May 2018. 69 are over 1 year old, and have been sent for specific osteopathic consultation.
We consider now 481 newborns followed for the early intervention.

Multietnicity
The origin of families is multiethnic, according to the social situation
- Italy (313 babies, 65%) – Other countries (168 babies, 35%) Est Europe: 27%, India e Pakistan: 22%, Africa: 13%, Cina: 3% - Romania 2

Clinical results
The proposed integrated approach has proved helpful in many aspects:
- Postural setting: improvement in alignment and stability
- Motor behavior: amelioration of motor skills and freedom of general movement
- Neuromotor development. Neurological evaluation showed a positive influence on the developmental progress of children
- Gastrointestinal functions. A good posture is related to good functioning of the neurovegetative system. This justifies the positive effects on gastrointestinal symptoms. Osteopathic specific approach is also helpful for these disorders
- Relationship parents - children. Parents are accompanied to see and support the potential of their child

BIBLIOGRAPHY

METHODS
The Service, started in 2010, is aimed at newborns at risk for developmental impairment and offers an integrated early program, covering the first years of life, which consists of:
- Pediatric examination, to evaluate general health and growth of the newborn
- Neurological assessment with careful regard to motor skills and progress in development. The aim is also early recognition of children who require specific rehabilitative programs
- Osteopathic evaluation and treatment, performed by physicians skilled in traditional pediatric osteopathy. They followed a specific training (2011-2015) with Doctor Viola M. Frymann at the Osteopathic Center for Children (San Diego, California), the international reference point for pediatric osteopathy
- Developmental care: we involve parents in a home program to promote motor, sensory and cognitive skills. The program includes: create a good environment, improve relationship and support the baby with sensory and motor stimulations during home activities.

CONCLUSIONS
Our experience encourages to explore the potential of osteopathic approach in neonatal and pediatric care. The integrated osteopathic approach could be considered a model of safe and effective early intervention to promote development in newborn at risk. More studies are necessary to quantify the results.

Acknowledgments
The project has been developed thanks to the teachings and supervision of Dr. Viola M. Frymann, MD, DO. (1921-2016), founder of the “Osteopathic Center for Children (SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA) and international reference point for pediatric osteopathy.

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