

Submission for the Review of the Australian Government Rebate on Private Health Insurance for Natural Therapies.

Submitted by:



Association of Remedial Masseurs Incorporated

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Contents

Remedial Massage – A definition	3
<i>Medibanks Requirements</i>	3
<i>Requirements for benefit payment</i>	4
Evidence Relating to Efficacy, cost effectiveness, safety and quality of Remedial Massage Therapy.	4
1. Massage Therapy After Cardiac Surgery	4
2. Massage and Fibromyalgia	6
3. Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis: Benefits from Massage Therapy	7
4. Benefits of massage therapy for hospitalized patients: a descriptive and qualitative evaluation.	7
5. Review of the Evidence for the Effectiveness, Safety, and Cost of Acupuncture, Massage Therapy, and Spinal Manipulation for Back Pain.....	7
Comparative Health System - Austria	8
Health Care Issues in Australia	8
Testimonials	9
Bibliography	10
Attachment 1.....	11
Attachment 2.....	12
Attachment 3.....	13
Attachment 4.....	14
Attachment 5.....	15
Attachment 6.....	16
Attachment 7.....	17

Remedial Massage – A definition

Recently, several representatives from a selection of Massage Associations (list of attendees attached) came together with Peter Dunn, National Ancillary Operations Manager from Medibank to discuss and decide a clear definition of Remedial Massage and how, as an industry, we can improve our services to maintain a professional medical approach in regards to Remedial Massage Therapy.

Medibank's remedial massage definition

Remedial massage is the systematic assessment and treatment of the muscles, tendons, ligaments and connective tissues of the body to assist in rehabilitation, pain and injury management. It's performed to create favourable conditions for the body to return to normal health after injury and is defined by the premise that the treatment can reasonably reverse certain physical effects a patient may be presenting. If a patient has suffered a moderate injury resulting in structural pain and/or loss of function, then remediation is required to reduce or eliminate pain and restore that function.

Remedial massage is designed to balance muscle/soft tissue length, tension, tone which will in turn promote the return to normal joint/capsular/bone position; increase the flow of blood and lymph, particularly in the injured areas, thus removing blockages, damaged cells, scar tissue and adhesions resulting from injury.

A remedial therapist must have knowledge of anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology to determine where to treat patients. Their services must be based on best practice principles and before any remedial massage treatment begins, a thorough patient consultation and assessment is to be performed to ascertain the patient's current health status. If the patient is suitable for remedial massage and relying on the patient's feedback to identify the areas that require attention, the therapist can then apply the relevant and appropriate treatment.

Note: The assessment must include the development of a specific treatment plan as to the best course of treatment for the patient's condition/injury. This treatment plan forms the basis of the clinical notes.

Medibanks Requirements

It is a requirement of Medibank that for all services which attract a benefit, comprehensive clinical notes are taken for each consultation/treatment and that the patient's records are duly maintained.

These notes must be consistent with accredited professional standards (and in their absence, The National Health Act) and are to be maintained in English.

It's important for the remedial therapist to understand that a patient's needs are unique, and therefore particular remedial massage techniques need to be selected with clinical expertise and applied in a way that suits that patient.

Requirements for benefit payment

Remedial massage services will attract a Medibank benefit only if services are provided to patients with an eligible Medibank cover and by a therapist that's recognised by Medibank and has a current Medibank provider number.

Services delivered to patients with an eligible Medibank cover but by therapists that aren't recognised by Medibank will not attract any benefit payment.

Should Medibank investigate a provider and discover benefits have been paid for services delivered to a Medibank patient by a non recognised provider, then recoveries of those monies will be sought as well as exploring what course of action will be taken to prevent future occurrences.

Evidence Relating to Efficacy, cost effectiveness, safety and quality of Remedial Massage Therapy.

Safety is reflected in training and supported by the relevant State and Territory authorities.

The Training Package qualification for the Diploma of Remedial Massage includes, in the Range of Variables, defines Remedial Massage Principles as including:

relevant national, state/territory or local government regulations and guidelines
P.8, HLTREM503C Plan remedial massage treatment strategy - available at
http://training.gov.au/TrainingComponentFiles/HLT07/HLTREM503C_R1.pdf

In support of this, Workcover NSW provide a template for Remedial Massage Plan, attachment 1, available at
http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/formspublications/publications/Documents/remedial_message_treatment_plan_4408.pdf

There are many research articles, peer reviewed and published, which support the efficiency and benefits of Massage. Review of five such articles below.

Research Articles

1. Massage Therapy After Cardiac Surgery
2. Massage and Fibromyalgia
3. Massage and Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis
4. Massage and Hospitalised Patients
5. Review of the Evidence for the Effectiveness, Safety, and Cost of Acupuncture, Massage Therapy, and Spinal Manipulation for Back Pain

1. Massage Therapy After Cardiac Surgery

Wang, et al, undertook an analysis of data from studies looking at the efficacy of massage therapy in post operative cardiac patients, with a particular focus on the experience at the Mayo Clinic.

Cardiac surgery presents a life-saving and life-enhancing opportunity to hundreds of thousands of patients each year in the United States. However, many patients face significant challenges during the postoperative period, including pain, anxiety, and tension. Mounting evidence demonstrates that such challenges can impair immune function and slow wound healing, in addition to causing suffering for the patient. Finding new approaches to mitigate these challenges is necessary if patients are to experience the full benefits of surgery. Massage therapy is a therapy that has significant evidence to support its role in meeting these needs. This paper looks at the data surrounding the use of massage therapy in cardiac surgery patients, with a special focus on the experience at Mayo Clinic.

Theoretic explanations for improvement in pain with massage therapy include the Gate Control Theory, which suggests that pressure applied with massage travels down the nerve pathway faster than pain, blocking pain transmission. Massage is also postulated to stimulate parasympathetic and inhibit sympathetic tone thus leading the body to a relaxation mode¹. Biochemically, massage is associated with increased release of beta-endorphins², serotonin, dopamine, and number of natural killer cells. It has been also been shown to decrease release of cortisol³. Decreased heart rate and blood pressure after massage therapy has also been reported.⁴ Wang, et al

Stevenson, in 1994, randomly selected five groups of 20 patients who were undergoing cardiac surgery into groups receiving a 20-minute foot massage on postoperative day 1. The control group was not undergoing massage. Patients showed significant results:

- decreased respiratory rate immediately after treatment
- psychological benefit on the day of treatment

Hattan, et al, in another study, randomised 25 cardiac surgery patients into 3 groups; and were treated to:

¹ R. Melzack, **From the gate to the neuromatrix**, Pain Suppl, 6 (1999), pp. S121-S126

² B. Kaada, O. Torsteinbø, **Increase of plasma beta-endorphins in connective tissue massage**, Gen Pharmacol, 20 (1989), pp. 487-489

³ T. Field, M. Hernandez-Reif, M. Diego et al., **Cortisol decreases and serotonin and dopamine increase following massage therapy**, Int J Neurosci, 115 (2005), pp. 1397-1413

⁴ T. Field, et al, pp. 1397-1413

Group 1 - 20-minute foot massage, **this group showed significant improvements on pain, tension and relaxation**

Group 2 - underwent 20 minutes of guided relaxation,

Group 3 - continued usual activity.

Kshetry et al, in yet another study, carried out a randomized study of 104 cardiac surgery patients randomized to standard care or a combination of light massage, music therapy, and guided imagery, with excellent outcomes.

Importantly, patients in the treatment group experienced greater reductions in pain and tension scores on postoperative days 1 and 2, than those in the control (standard care) group.

The authors also noted that the control group needed more analgesics compared with groups receiving complementary therapies.

The Mayo clinic experience did not show such positive results, however, the authors expect that was due to the 'massage being given on those who were not used to having a massage. The inherent anxiety of the new treatment (massage) was thought to have been a negative influence. They have since gathered further evidence attesting to the negative influence of introducing a 'new' treatment to people in a clinical setting.

The authors end with:

By recognizing the challenges our patients face in the postoperative period (eg, pain, anxiety and tension) and by bringing evidence-based interventions (eg, massage therapy) to bear on these challenges, we can build on the solid foundation that surgery provides and even further improve the health and well being of our patients.

<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.lib.uts.edu.au/10.1053/j.semtcvs.2010.10.005>

2. Massage and Fibromyalgia

Thirty adult fibromyalgia syndrome subjects were randomly assigned to:

- massage therapy
 - transcutaneous electrical stimulation (TENS)
 - placebo transcutaneous electrical stimulation (no-current)
- each for 30-minute treatment sessions two times per week for 5 weeks.

The results showed:

Massage therapy subjects - lower anxiety and depression, and lower cortisol levels immediately after the therapy sessions on the first and last days of the study; improvement on the dolorimeter measure of pain; less pain the last week, less stiffness and fatigue, and fewer nights of difficult sleeping.

The TENS group - similar changes after therapy on the last day of the study.

Massage therapy was the most effective therapy with these fibromyalgia patients.

<http://europepmc.org/abstract/MED/19078022/reload=0;jsessionid=qNSHPhKvaTULFFErKKq1.0>

3. Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis: Benefits from Massage Therapy

This research involved a study of children with mild to moderate juvenile rheumatoid arthritis who were massaged by their parents 15 minutes a day for 30 days. The control group engaged in relaxation therapy.

The results showed cortisol levels were decreased by the massage. Over the 30-day period their pain decreased on self-reports, parent reports, and their physician's assessment of pain (both the incidence and severity) and pain-limiting activities. <http://jpepsy.oxfordjournals.org/content/22/5/607.short>

4. Benefits of massage therapy for hospitalized patients: a descriptive and qualitative evaluation.

This research was to "...uncover and elucidate a range of patient outcomes of a therapeutic massage program within an acute care setting."

This was done through surveys and narrative reports involving 70 patients, 14 healthcare providers, and 4 massage therapists, and 113 hospitalized patients received 1 to 4 massages during the course of their hospital stay.

More than two thirds of patients attributed the positive responses of:

- enhanced mobility,
- greater energy,
- increased participation in treatment,
- faster recovery

to massage therapy.

The study supported the value of hospital-based massage therapy and uncovered a range of benefits of massage therapy for hospitalized patients (that should be studied further).

5. Review of the Evidence for the Effectiveness, Safety, and Cost of Acupuncture, Massage Therapy, and Spinal Manipulation for Back Pain

The research report from Cherkin, et al – claims:

"Initial studies have found massage to be effective for persistent back pain."
P.898. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10394676>

This research was carried out by the systematic review of randomized controlled trials (RCT). Published since 1995, that evaluated acupuncture, massage therapy, or spinal manipulation for nonspecific back pain and RCTs published since the reviews were conducted.

Comparative Health System - Austria

Austria – the Curative Masseur

The Austrian government's General Social Insurance Act (ASVG) entitles all insured people to benefits. This gives the right to services including physiotherapy, ergotherapy, speech therapy, **curative massage** and similar therapies provided by health professionals *other than physicians*.

On the 4th July 2002, the reform of health professions continued in parliament, The discussion can be accessed here:

http://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/PR/JAHR_2002/PK0532/

The secretary of state for health, Reinhart Wanek said:

"Außerdem gebe es einen zunehmenden Bedarf an den Tätigkeiten der Heilmassseure, da die Störungen des Bewegungs- und Stützapparates einen großen Anteil an den Erkrankungen ausmachen. Er denke auch nicht, dass die Erweiterung der Leistungspalette a priori zu einer Verteuerung führen müsse."

TRANSLATION:

"Also, there is an increasing demand for Therapeutic masseurs because disorders of the musculoskeletal system make up a large proportion of ailments. He also said that the extension of the range of services does not lead to a increase in cost, but a redistribution of funds."

Remedial massage therapy is fully integrated in the Austrian and Germany health system to help reduce costs and is referred to as 'curative massage'.

Attachments 4, 5 and 6 show the level of support for massage in Austria. These letters are references for one of A.R.M.'s members – Mr Richard Rohrhofer

Health Care Issues in Australia

Back pain and headache are the most common chronic pain human beings experience, and in most of the cases muscle tensions are involved.

That's exactly the field where massage therapists work in.

- The theoretical and practical training of remedial massage therapists to release muscle tensions involves many more hours than a physiotherapist.
- With taking away remedial massage therapy from the health system, the requirement of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) would become redundant.

The quality of massage would diminish and that would see remedial massage in Australia taking a step back in comparison to the rest of the world.

Australia's preventative health system would go backwards if the current support for remedial massage therapy was removed from the private health insurance system.

Testimonials

Attached (pages 11 to 17) are reference letters from a variety of professionals, supporting the efficacy and value of remedial massage therapy.

1. [REDACTED]
2. [REDACTED]
3. [REDACTED] October 2004
4. [REDACTED] September 2004
5. [REDACTED] Austria, June 2004
6. [REDACTED] February 2004
7. [REDACTED]

Original letters are available on request.

Bibliography

Cherkin, D., PhD; Sherman, K., PhD; Richard A. Deyo, R., MD, MPH; and Shekelle, P., MD, PhD, 2003, *A Review of the Evidence for the Effectiveness, Safety, and Cost of Acupuncture, Massage Therapy, and Spinal Manipulation for Back Pain*, American College of Physicians, COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE SERIES, Series Editors: David M. Eisenberg, MD, and Ted J. Kaptchuk, OMD

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10394676> downloaded 3/12/12

Sunshine W, Field TM, Quintino O, Fierro K, Kuhn C, Burman I, Schanberg S, *Massage and Fibromyalgia*, Touch Research Institute, University of Miami School of Medicine (W.S., T.M.F., O.Q., K.F.); Duke University Medical School (C.K., S.S.); and Educating Hands School (I.B.), *Journal of Clinical Rheumatology : Practical Reports on Rheumatic & Musculoskeletal Diseases* [1996, 2(1):18-22], Lippincott Williams & Wilkins: Philadelphia, PA, United States

Tiffany Field, Maria Hernandez-Reif, Susan Seligmen, Josh Krasnegor, William Sunshine, Rafael Rivas-Chacon, Saul Schanberg, Cynthia Kuhn, *Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis: Benefits from Massage Therapy*, 1997, Touch Research Institute, University of Miami School of Medicine, US

Smith MC, Stallings MA, Mariner S, Burrall M, *Benefits of massage therapy for hospitalized patients: a descriptive and qualitative evaluation*, *Alternative Therapies In Health And Medicine*, 1078-6791, 1999 Jul, Vol. 5, Issue 4. University of Colorado Health Sciences Center School of Nursing in Denver, USA.

http://europepmc.org/abstract/MED/19078022/reload=0;jsessionid=qNSHPhKvaTUL_EFErKKg1.0 downloaded 3/12/12

<http://jpepsy.oxfordjournals.org/content/22/5/607.short>

http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/formspublications/publications/Documents/remedial_massage_treatment_plan_4408.pdf

http://training.gov.au/TrainingComponentFiles/HLT07/HLTREM503C_R1.pdf

http://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/PR/JAHR_2002/PK0532/

http://www.bmg.gv.at/cms/home/attachments/2/1/2/CH1015/CMS1287855495948/the_austrian_health_care_system_2010_e1.pdf

Attachment 1



chiropractic - massage
sports injury management

3/12/2012

Let it be known that I, Dr. [REDACTED] (Chiropractor) have been a long term client of massage therapist [REDACTED]. During that time [REDACTED] has offered care for various ailments, and has provided gentle, effective long lasting relief. In the time I have known [REDACTED], I have also employed her services as a massage therapist in my clinic, being a firm believer in the therapeutic efficacy of massage therapy as adjunct to manual medicine. I have always been impressed by her solid knowledge base, exceptional skill, and professional manner.

Regards,
Dr. [REDACTED] (Chiropractor)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dr. [REDACTED]', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

[REDACTED]
Member: Chiropractic Association of Australia and the Chiropractic and Osteopathic College of Australia.

Attachment 2

Dr. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

7 December 2012

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is confirm that [REDACTED] remedial massage therapist, has been providing remedial massage therapy to many of my patients as well as members of my family for many years. Her therapy has improve their general well being, both physical and psychological. Her treatment has also been effective in reducing pain cause by various medical conditions and as a result patients are able reduce long term medical costs.

I strongly support the continuation of remedial massage therapy as part of general medical management of patients with various medical conditions, especially those with muscular skeletal problems.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

~~_____~~

Dr. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

To whom it may concern

October 2004

Letter of recommendation

Mr. [REDACTED] has been holding lectures on health care for a number of years. He was contacted by various TV and radio stations and has gained a local, as well as an international, reputation as a health expert.

In medical circles, Mr. [REDACTED] has passed on knowledge of massage techniques he himself has developed. His lectures and seminars are always well attended and well received.

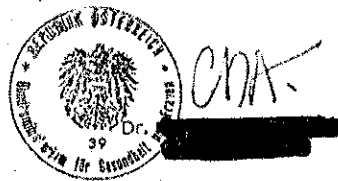
Due to his internationally acquired expertise and exceptional talent, doctors often consult with Mr. Rohrhofer and seek his advice. In many cases, his treatments have helped to avert operations or speed up a patient's recovery.

His collaboration with medical institutions has always been highly satisfactory. He always looks for collegial solutions to provide the best service for the patient. The success of his treatments have often amazed patients as well as doctors.

The costs of hospital treatment and rehabilitation are continuously rising. This is why it is so important to have therapists such as Mr. [REDACTED] who reaches a large number of patients and other interested persons with his recognized methods of treatment.

We greatly regret that Mr. [REDACTED] is seeking career opportunities abroad. We are confident that he will succeed in his future plans and wish him all the best.

We warmly recommend Mr. [REDACTED] on the basis of his exceptional talent and his extensive knowledge.



[REDACTED]



[Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 [Redacted]

To Whom it may concern

Your Reference [Redacted] Our Reference [Redacted] Date 22.09.2004

Letter of Recommendation - Mr. [Redacted]

Mr. [Redacted] has been successfully practicing preventative medicine and massage-therapy for many years. He has acquired great and extensive knowledge, which, in combination with his exceptional talent, has made him indispensable to his patients.

[Redacted] works as an orthopaedic masseur and therapist. His work sets an excellent example for others and is characterized by his sensitivity, outstanding empathy, great sense of responsibility for patients and his high degree of human decency. These abilities allow him provide the ideal results for every patient. His impressively successful methods of treatment are not only appreciated by specialists, but have also already gained an international reputation.

His other areas of expertise consist of preventative medicine and medical education. Within circles of experts, he has passed on massage techniques which he developed himself. His lectures on preventative medicine have always been well attended and highly valued.

Mr. [Redacted] vast knowledge and pedagogic abilities have also been greatly appreciated by the media, which has led various radio- and TV-stations to consult him. Even with regular audiences unfamiliar with medical-studies, he verifiably managed to evoke a greater consciousness for the body and health,

All the talents described above allow me to confidently recommend Mr. Richard Rohrhofer to you.

With kind regards,
 [Redacted Signature]
 [Redacted Name]

Attachment 5

[REDACTED]

Vienna, 19th June 2004

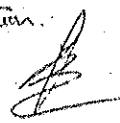
[REDACTED]

As general surgeon (Deputy Head of Department), sports doctor (Member of the Medical World Council of FIBA) and colonel doctor in the Austrian army, I have worked very successfully for 10 years with [REDACTED] has an extraordinary talent as a masseur in various techniques. His outstanding abilities as a radiesthetist and osteopath, combined with his massage activities, induced me work with Richard Rohrhofer in a group practice. His talents were there for us to use as an alternative medicine whenever the methods of conventional medicine were unsuccessful. I have also pointed out the possibilities of alternative medicine in my lectures at the University of Vienna and have had these demonstrated by [REDACTED]. I very much regret the departure of [REDACTED] my practice. Unfortunately, at present there is no one that I know in Vienna who possesses such a broad spectrum of abilities and who could replace him.

I wish Mr. [REDACTED] the very best on the next leg of his journey through life, and hope that he is able to continue applying his extraordinary talents for the benefit of the patients in his new life.

[REDACTED]
Specialist in Surgery
[REDACTED]

I certify that this is a true translation.





Certified translation

Dr. [REDACTED]
Neurosurgeon
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Therapie und Massageinstitut

Vienna, February 5, 2004

Subject: Recommendation

As a neurosurgeon specialising in surgery on the spinal column, I have cooperated with [REDACTED] for many years. I have always enjoyed our cooperation and I could entrust him with the pre- and postoperative treatment of even the most difficult cases.

The patients I referred to him suffered from lumbar and cervical slipped discs, osteochondrosis and vertebrostenoses; he also treated patients after sports injuries or spinal tumour operations.

I would like to recommend Mr. [REDACTED] most warmly on account of his outstanding talent, skills and empathy.

(personal signature)

Dr. [REDACTED]
Stamp of Dr. [REDACTED]

The exact correspondence of the translation to the original is attested by my sworn oath as court interpreter for the English language.

February 17, 2004

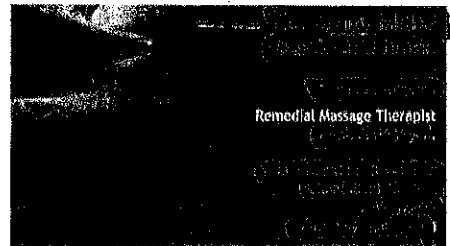


Attachment 7

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Contact: [Redacted]
Phone: [Redacted]
Facsimile: [Redacted]
E-mail: [Redacted]
Return Address: [Redacted]
File: [Redacted]



To whom it may concern

Re: **Massage Efficacy**

I am the sole public practitioner physiotherapist of [Redacted] I have a busy 2 days in which to fit all one to one musculoskeletal, neurological, paediatric, obs/gyn and other appointments. Additionally I need to allocate around 25% -50% of my time providing health promotion activities such as exercise classes, pain workshops etc. This is a unique setting as there are no private physiotherapists, and no other allied health options. Clients are able to see physiotherapy free of charge as a public practice, and massage is a private service. Being able to gain rebates is vital to the accessibility of the service.

I have found working alongside a remedial masseuse a wonderful adjunct to my practice. The benefits include the following:

- *I can discharge clients earlier from my books into excellent ongoing care*
- *Less people are rebounding for exacerbation of old complaints.*
- *Some clients seek out massage as first contact for a musculoskeletal complaint - often they do not then require physiotherapy input*
- *Other clients who seek massage as first contact but who have a complexed or serious condition are referred onto me by the masseuse for physiotherapy assessment and management.*
- *The health centre is being seen more as a wellness rather than sickness centre with options for personal choice*

I would be happy to discuss the benefits of being able to work alongside a masseuse further if it is helpful

Yours faithfully


[Redacted]
Physiotherapist

10/11/2012