

Position Statement

Temporomandibular Joint Treatment

Preamble

The issues surrounding the application of temporomandibular joint (TMJ) treatment modalities are specific. They include legal, medical, therapist training and protection of the consumer.

Massage & Myotherapy Australia (Association) is of the opinion that TMJ treatment is within the scope of practice of Association members specifically trained in this area of the body and employ such techniques as, but not limited to, Bowen Therapy, Craniosacral Therapy, Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD), Manual Trigger Point Therapy (MTrPT), Myofascial Dry Needling (MDN), Myotherapy and Neuromuscular Therapy (NMT).

To avoid ethical complaints in relation to TMJ treatment, the Association believes the client should have available to them adequate information about risk of practice, the treatment options (intra-oral / extra-oral) and the opportunity to informed consentⁱ prior to the treatment.

The therapist must conform to the infection control measures relevant to their state and local law.

Aim

This position statement is to serve as a context for therapists who perform treatment for temporomandibular joint dysfunctions (TMDs) and to provide a platform from where the National Ethics Committee can make an informed determination in relation to any complaints and for the National Education Committee to determine appropriate levels of training.

This position statement should be read in conjunction with the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practiceⁱⁱ, the TMJ Guidelinesⁱⁱⁱ, the practitioners' level of education and the practitioners own scope of practice.

The Association Board of Directors serves to protect both the membership and the public by adopting this position statement which is resolutely linked to the overall policy of the Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice^{iv}.

Process

Every remedial therapist and myotherapist has the right to make the decision as to the appropriateness of treatment in consultation with the client. However, decision making and treatment protocols should be consistent in context with the pathology and within the scope of practice of the practitioner.

Remedial therapists and myotherapists should never, under any circumstance, proceed with treatment without first obtaining written "informed consent"^v having provided the client with information on how the treatment will be performed and any associated risks.

TMJ treatment should not be considered without adequate assessment of the presenting signs and symptoms, and engagement of the methods of differential diagnosis. This approach ensures the integrity of the therapist (scope of practice), the treatment methods selected, and in consideration of the therapeutic relationship.

Position Statement

The Association's Position Statement advises that training in the application of TMJ techniques requires therapists to hold a minimum of the Diploma of Remedial Massage, or later equivalents, and have excellent knowledge in arthrology, osteology, myology and physiology.

The Association advises that therapists practising intra-oral techniques to relieve symptoms of TMJ be immunised for Hepatitis A and B as per health department regulations in each state /territory^{vi}.

ⁱ Informed Consent – Position Statement

ⁱⁱ Code of Ethics & Standards of Practice

ⁱⁱⁱ TMJ Guidelines

^{iv} *ibid*

^v *ibid*

^{vi} Health Departments in Australia