

Most studies of massage for pain show low certainty of evidence

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Most reviews of the use of massage therapy for painful adult health conditions report low- or very low-certainty evidence, according to a review [published](#) online July 15 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Selene Mak, Ph.D., from the Veterans Health Administration at the Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, and colleagues conducted a systematic literature review to understand outcomes of [massage therapy](#) for painful adult health conditions.

Based on mapping of 17 systematic reviews covering 13 health conditions, the researchers found that across the reviews, no [conclusions](#) were rated as high certainty of evidence and seven conclusions were rated as moderate-certainty evidence. Among the conclusions rated as moderate certainty, massage therapy had beneficial associations with pain.

"This study found that despite massage therapy having been the subject of hundreds of randomized [clinical trials](#) and dozens of systematic reviews about adult health conditions since 2018, there were few conclusions that had greater than low certainty of evidence," the authors write. "The field of massage therapy would be best advanced by educating the wider research community with clearer definitions of massage therapy and whether it is appropriate to include multiple modalities in the same [systematic review](#)."

More information: Selene Mak et al, Use of Massage Therapy for Pain, 2018-2023, *JAMA Network Open* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.22259](#)

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