



Mr. Christian Fossum (Norway)

Osteopath DO and Associate Professor

Invited Speaker – Saturday 24. September from 9.30-11.00

Round Table Discussion – Sunday 25. September from 9.30-10.30

BIO

Christian Fossum, DO, is an Associate Professor at the School of Health Sciences at Kristiania University College. He was previously the Vice-Principal of the European School of Osteopathy in Maidstone, UK; Assistant Professor in the Department of Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine at the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine; and Associate Director of the A.T. Still Research Institute at the A.T. Still University of Health Sciences. He has published numerous articles and book-chapters and is an invited speaker for conferences and postgraduate courses around the world. He also retains a private practice.

Presentation title

Osteopathy: From a charismatic social movement and disruptive influence to a global health profession

Abstract

Osteopathy celebrates 130 years as a profession which globally has developed along two trajectories: outside the United States there is an estimated 80,000 osteopaths with a limited scope of practice, and in the US an estimated 130,000 osteopathic physicians delivering care in all 26 medical specialties. Despite different practice profiles, the recurring theme discussing the distinctiveness of osteopathy and osteopathic medicine is (1) a proposed philosophy of health care, and (2) the central role of manipulative medicine in its therapeutic armamentarium. However, since the beginning of the profession, there has not been a single decade without discussions, debates, and arguments around the role, identity and future of osteopathy, and multiple landmark events and shifts in the landscape of health-care politics, services, and delivery, have had a central role in shaping and morphing the profession.

In the world of manual therapies, the osteopathic profession was the first to organize hands-on manual diagnosis and treatment into a teachable system, and assign it its primary role in the general practice of health care. Arguably it has had a major influence on the historical development of other manual therapies. Through its history, osteopathy has also been subjected to medico-cultural shifts. It started in the booming of mechanically oriented and repair-minded therapies at the tail-end of the industrial revolution, whereas we now live in a growing trend of wellness and psychologically oriented society in a more complex world.

This presentation will focus on the past, present and the future of osteopathy as a manual therapy provider and its potential role in an everchanging climate of health care. The rhetoric of the profession will be used to discuss the social construction of identity through the history of osteopathy and bring to attention the need of either crafting or strengthening an identity resonating with the social, practical, and academic role of the European osteopathic profession.