***Table S1: Similarity between tested intervention and placebo control intervention across all included studies, irrespective of therapy type.*** *Items were rated if applicable to individual studies (N), with the following possible ratings and corresponding numerical values: Yes = 2, Probably Yes = 1, Not reported = 0, Probably No = -1, No = -2. Means and Standard Deviations (SD) provided.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Mean** | **SD** | **N** |
| **Overall similarity index** | 0.88 | 0.66 | 198 |
| Follow-up contact frequency and mode | 1.91 | 0.46 | 189 |
| Delivery formats (group vs. individual) | 1.87 | 0.51 | 198 |
| Assessments and re-assessments | 1.83 | 0.55 | 198 |
| Number of treatments / sessions | 1.77 | 0.82 | 198 |
| Treatment frequency | 1.70 | 0.88 | 195 |
| Treatment environment | 1.30 | 0.98 | 197 |
| Treatment duration | 1.28 | 1.30 | 197 |
| Body area(s) addressed (or criteria for which body parts were addressed, e.g., symptomatic vs. asymptomatic; NA if cognitive therapy) | 1.08 | 1.50 | 166 |
| Level of patient participation (physical & cognitive) | 0.92 | 1.51 | 198 |
| Application modes (manual, device, talking, video, etc.) | 0.87 | 1.75 | 198 |
| Intervention standardization / protocol flexibility | 0.80 | 1.29 | 197 |
| Personal interactions with personnel other than therapists (i.e., admin, other medical, and research staff) | 0.77 | 0.78 | 194 |
| Cognitive function targeted or attention focus | 0.75 | 1.45 | 130 |
| Co-interventions | 0.72 | 1.10 | 161 |
| Personal interactions with therapy providers | 0.65 | 1.02 | 192 |
| Information provided to participants as to the efficacy of the intervention they receive (verbally or as part of consent process), where reported | 0.63 | 0.90 | 198 |
| Thematic content of sessions | 0.58 | 1.55 | 165 |
| Physical procedures performed or undergone (may include simply sitting and talking in the case of talking therapies) | 0.52 | 1.71 | 194 |
| Fidelity monitoring | 0.50 | 0.95 | 156 |
| Level of individualisation to patient (incl. when non-individualised) | 0.41 | 1.49 | 195 |
| Types of procedural steps per treatment session | 0.21 | 1.72 | 198 |
| Treatment-specific sensory cues (for the patient, did the intervention involve physical sensations that were comparable to those of the control intervention? (Ignore vision and consider e.g. sound levels, touch, temperature, vibration, movement, pain sensations, smells) | 0.21 | 1.65 | 197 |
| Number of procedural steps per treatment session | 0.14 | 1.70 | 198 |
| Equipment / devices employed | -0.07 | 1.97 | 102 |
| Other therapy-specific considerations, incl. replication of side effects | -0.39 | 1.13 | 173 |

***Table S2: Individual similarity ratings per therapy type****, comparing placebo control and active interventions across 25 different features. Higher ratings (max. 2) indicate larger degrees of similarity across trials and vice versa (min. rating -2). NA = Not applicable.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Spinal manipulation** | **Craniosacral therapy** | **Other manual therapies** | **Cognitive behavioural / other psychological** | **Physiotherapy / Rehabilitation** | **Self-Management** | **Spiritual / Energetic** | **Other** |
| **N** | **M** | **SD** | **N** | **M** | **SD** | **N** | **M** | **SD** | **N** | **M** | **SD** | **N** | **M** | **SD** | **N** | **M** | **SD** | **N** | **M** | **SD** | **N** | **M** | **SD** |
| Overall Index | 48 | 1.07 | 0.54 | 22 | 0.83 | 0.62 | 64 | 0.93 | 0.60 | 27 | 0.70 | 0.71 | 22 | 0.37 | 0.77 | 5 | 0.40 | 0.38 | 8 | 1.52 | 0.42 | 2 | 1.61 | 0.15 |
| Number of sessions | 48 | 1.85 | 0.65 | 22 | 1.95 | 0.21 | 64 | 1.87 | 0.55 | 27 | 1.48 | 1.28 | 22 | 1.55 | 1.18 | 5 | 1.00 | 1.73 | 8 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 2 | 2 | 0.00 |
| Treatment duration | 48 | 1.17 | 1.16 | 22 | 1.00 | 1.57 | 63 | 1.37 | 1.30 | 27 | 1.48 | 1.19 | 22 | 1.36 | 1.40 | 5 | 0.20 | 2.05 | 8 | 1.75 | 0.71 | 2 | 1.5 | 0.71 |
| Treatment frequency | 46 | 1.78 | 0.73 | 22 | 1.86 | 0.35 | 63 | 1.92 | 0.27 | 27 | 1.33 | 1.30 | 22 | 1.36 | 1.40 | 5 | 0.40 | 1.82 | 8 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 2 | 2 | 0.00 |
| Assessments | 48 | 1.85 | 0.55 | 22 | 1.64 | 0.79 | 64 | 1.83 | 0.58 | 27 | 1.89 | 0.42 | 22 | 1.86 | 0.47 | 5 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 8 | 1.88 | 0.35 | 2 | 2 | 0.00 |
| Cointerventions | 38 | 0.82 | 0.90 | 16 | 1.13 | 0.96 | 53 | 0.62 | 1.00 | 21 | 0.43 | 1.24 | 20 | 0.65 | 1.42 | 5 | 0.20 | 1.10 | 6 | 1.83 | 0.41 | 2 | 0 | 2.83 |
| Standardization | 48 | 0.63 | 1.41 | 22 | 0.91 | 0.97 | 64 | 1.00 | 1.27 | 27 | 0.63 | 1.39 | 22 | 0.41 | 1.33 | 4 | 0.75 | 0.96 | 8 | 1.38 | 0.92 | 2 | 1.5 | 0.71 |
| Fidelity monitoring | 36 | 0.36 | 0.87 | 19 | 0.37 | 0.68 | 47 | 0.32 | 0.81 | 25 | 1.12 | 1.13 | 20 | 0.55 | 1.15 | 2 | 1.00 | 1.41 | 6 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1 | 2 | 0.00 |
| Individualization | 48 | 0.42 | 1.61 | 22 | 0.59 | 1.22 | 63 | 0.29 | 1.55 | 25 | 0.44 | 1.53 | 22 | 0.05 | 1.40 | 5 | 0.80 | 1.64 | 8 | 1.13 | 0.99 | 2 | 2 | 0.00 |
| Application mode | 48 | 1.46 | 1.34 | 22 | -0.05 | 2.01 | 64 | 0.73 | 1.86 | 27 | 1.11 | 1.50 | 22 | -0.14 | 1.94 | 5 | 1.80 | 0.45 | 8 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 2 | 2 | 0.00 |
| Delivery format  | 48 | 1.96 | 0.20 | 22 | 1.82 | 0.40 | 64 | 1.95 | 0.21 | 27 | 1.89 | 0.42 | 22 | 1.41 | 1.22 | 5 | 1.80 | 0.45 | 8 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 2 | 2 | 0.00 |
| Efficacy information | 48 | 0.60 | 0.98 | 22 | 0.41 | 0.80 | 64 | 0.59 | 0.81 | 27 | 0.81 | 0.92 | 22 | 0.64 | 1.00 | 5 | 0.40 | 0.89 | 8 | 1.13 | 0.99 | 2 | 0.5 | 0.71 |
| Thematic content | 37 | 1.35 | 1.01 | 18 | 0.89 | 1.18 | 50 | 0.88 | 1.32 | 27 | -0.59 | 1.69 | 20 | -0.15 | 1.73 | 5 | -1.80 | 0.45 | 7 | 1.57 | 0.79 | 1 | 2 | 0.00 |
| Body areas | 48 | 1.29 | 1.32 | 22 | 0.68 | 1.67 | 63 | 1.46 | 1.16 | 1 | 1.0 | NA | 21 | 0.14 | 1.85 | 3 | -2.00 | 0.00 | 7 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 0 |  |  |
| Physical procedures | 48 | 0.75 | 1.58 | 22 | 0.50 | 1.63 | 64 | 0.56 | 1.73 | 24 | 0.58 | 1.74 | 22 | -0.50 | 1.79 | 4 | -0.25 | 2.06 | 8 | 1.50 | 1.41 | 2 | 2 | 0.00 |
| Cognition / attention focus | 29 | 1.28 | 0.96 | 12 | 1.25 | 0.75 | 37 | 1.16 | 1.24 | 26 | -0.04 | 1.61 | 19 | -0.21 | 1.78 | 5 | 0.60 | 1.52 | 1 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 1 | 2 | 0.00 |
| Participation | 48 | 1.56 | 0.87 | 22 | 1.32 | 1.13 | 64 | 0.89 | 1.58 | 27 | 0.33 | 1.59 | 22 | -0.09 | 1.82 | 5 | -1.00 | 1.41 | 8 | 1.88 | 0.35 | 2 | 2 | 0.00 |
| Procedure Types | 48 | 0.71 | 1.60 | 22 | 0.18 | 1.74 | 64 | 0.33 | 1.69 | 27 | -0.52 | 1.45 | 22 | -0.59 | 1.84 | 5 | -1.60 | 0.89 | 8 | 1.75 | 0.71 | 2 | 2 | 0.00 |
| Procedures number | 48 | 0.46 | 1.61 | 22 | 0.23 | 1.66 | 64 | 0.31 | 1.73 | 27 | -0.37 | 1.47 | 22 | -0.86 | 1.67 | 5 | -1.60 | 0.89­ | 8 | 1.75 | 0.71 | 2 | 2 | 0.00 |
| Equipment | 15 | 0.40 | 2.03 | 12 | -1.33 | 1.56 | 33 | -0.30 | 2.01 | 18 | 0.56 | 1.87 | 15 | -0.73 | 1.75 | 5 | 1.20 | 1.79 | 2 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 2 | 2 | 0.00 |
| Environment | 48 | 1.38 | 0.76 | 22 | 1.27 | 1.03 | 64 | 1.50 | 0.71 | 26 | 1.08 | 1.20 | 22 | 0.95 | 1.33 | 5 | 0.00 | 1.87 | 8 | 1.63 | 0.52 | 2 | 2 | 0.00 |
| Sensation | 48 | 0.71 | 1.52 | 22 | 0.14 | 1.78 | 64 | 0.11 | 1.61 | 27 | 0.04 | 1.65 | 22 | -0.86 | 1.55 | 5 | 1.80 | 0.45 | 7 | 1.00 | 1.41 | 2 | 0 | 2.83 |
| Other therapy-specifics | 45 | -0.44 | 1.27 | 18 | -0.28 | 0.90 | 58 | -0.60 | 0.99 | 19 | -0.05 | 1.27 | 21 | -0.52 | 1.08 | 5 | 0.00 | 1.41 | 6 | 0.67 | 1.03 | 1 | 1 | 0.00 |
| Interaction provider | 48 | 1.06 | 0.81 | 22 | 0.45 | 0.67 | 64 | 0.63 | 1.00 | 24 | 0.54 | 1.14 | 21 | -0.14 | 1.06 | 3 | 1.33 | 0.58 | 8 | 0.75 | 1.49 | 2 | 1.5 | 0.71 |
| Interaction staff | 48 | 0.71 | 0.74 | 22 | 0.59 | 0.80 | 64 | 0.89 | 0.78 | 26 | 0.69 | 1.01 | 22 | 0.64 | 0.58 | 2 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 8 | 1.13 | 0.64 | 2 | 1 | 1.41 |
| Follow-up | 45 | 1.96 | 0.30 | 22 | 1.91 | 0.29 | 60 | 1.95 | 0.39 | 27 | 1.74 | 0.86 | 21 | 1.95 | 0.22 | 5 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 7 | 1.71 | 0.76 | 2 | 2 | 0.00 |