This is a personal narrative of a training mission with the military—where I functioned as a medic and Spanish translator—I observed that the patient population of Chiantla and Tojocaz, Guatemala were unfamiliar with the use of physical examination and physical treatment (i.e. Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine)

Through the hands, a physician can listen to, diagnose, and communicate with patients. Many people are receptive to this hands-on paradigm used to promote health

Touch was a rarely used method to diagnose and communicate with the patients in this region

Does touch used in patient-physician encounters affect care?
The Touch of a DO: The Need for the Global Advancement of Osteopathic Medicine
Phillip N. Hilton, OMS-II
A.T. Still University – Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine

Patient 1:

30-year-old male c/o neck, back, and knee pain

Patient sat across the table from the physician who asked a series of questions

No physical examination was performed

Prescribed NSAID X 1 week for pain

Patient 2:

31-year-old male c/o back and knee

Sat next to the physician who asked medical history

Physical examination performed

Diagnosed with somatic dysfunction: appropriate OMM was performed with a steroid shot in knee
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**Patient 1:**
Left the encounter content with his treatment

**Patient 2:**
Appeared stunned when physician asked permission to touch and treat with his hands, as they had never been touched by a physician before

Left impressed with the experience and shared with his family and friends his positive experience with touch in the physical exam and hands-on treatment approach

Patient volume increased by 500 patients on second clinic day
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Discussion

Of the 195 countries in the world, roughly fifty of them grant U.S. trained Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine full practicing rights

It is our opportunity to go into the world and share osteopathic medicine and allow others to be touched by this human connections

The power of touch changes lives. Through physical contact, physicians can diagnose while simultaneously communicating that we care

Conclusion

The importance of touching patients and treating the whole person is the most important lesson learned from this observation

An unspoken connection occurs when touch is used.

Touch symbolizes everything important in a physician-patient relationship: confidence, faith, and equality.