

Lubbe D, Lakhani E, et al. Manipulative therapy and rehabilitation for recurrent ankle sprain with functional instability: a short-term, assessor-blind, parallel-group randomized trial. J Manipulative Physiol Ther 2015;38:22-34.

Design: randomized clinical trial

Purpose of study: to determine the effectiveness of manipulative therapy compared with rehabilitation for the treatment of recurrent ankle sprain with functional instability

Reasons not to cite as evidence:

- The outcome is measured at baseline and immediately after the last treatment session, but there is no followup data past that time
- There are difficulties with the implementation of the study, one of which involves the fact that a “blinded examiner” selected the joints to be manipulated, and the manipulations were done by a different clinician
 - o This blinded examiner did not clearly examine all patients for joint manipulation; to be a blinded evaluator of the joint stability outcomes, this examiner would have to have examined the joints of the control group as if they were to have had their joints manipulated if the assessment of outcome was to be blinded
- As the authors acknowledge, the manipulation group had two more sessions of treatment than the control group, thinking that this is unlikely to influence the outcome, but the difference in pain outcome between the two groups was small and could have been influenced by this factor
- The Foot and Ankle Disability Index (FADI), one of the primary outcomes, was not different between the intervention groups
- Overall, the limitations of the study mean that it cannot be used as evidence, but the option for joint manipulation should not be precluded on that basis