

Pregnancy Massage

Preamble

The issues surrounding the application of massage through all stages of pregnancy are specific. They include legal, medical, therapist training and protection of the consumer.

The Australian Association of Massage Therapists Ltd (AAMT) is of the opinion that massage during pregnancy is within the scope of practice of massage therapists and remedial massage therapists who have undertaken further specialised training in pregnancy massage other than the training received within the National Health Training Package (HLT)ⁱ.

To avoid ethical complaints in relation to massage during pregnancy, the AAMT believes the client should have available to them adequate information about the risks involved throughout all stages of pregnancy and the opportunity to informed consent prior to the treatment.

Aim

This position statement is to serve as a context for therapists who apply massage during pregnancy and to provide a platform from where the National Ethics Committee (NEC) can make an informed determination in relation to any complaints and for the National Education Committee (NEdC) to determine appropriate levels of training.

This position statement should be read in conjunction with the AAMT Code of Ethics and Standards of Practiceⁱⁱ, the AAMT Pregnancy Massage Guidelinesⁱⁱⁱ, and in combination with the practitioners' level of education and the practitioners own scope of practice.

The AAMT Board of Directors serves to protect both the membership and the public by adopting this position statement which is resolutely linked to the overall policy of the Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice.

Process

Every massage therapist has the right to make the decision as to the appropriateness of massage during pregnancy, and in consultation with the client. However, decision making and treatment protocols should be consistent, and in context, with the complexities of the pathophysiology and multi-system changes unique to pregnancy and within the scope of practice of the practitioner.

Pregnancy massage should not be considered without adequate assessment of the client. A written medical clearance is required where the health of the woman and / or her child has potential of compromise or is compromised. It is a recommendation to minimize risk by aligning pregnancy massage treatments with pre-natal check-ups. This approach ensures the integrity of the therapist (scope of practice); that the client has the most relevant health information in regard to her baby and herself, and in consideration of the therapeutic relationship.

Position Statement

A health care worker must encourage clients to inform their treating medical practitioner (if any) of the treatments or care being provided^{iv}

Massage therapists should never, under any circumstance, proceed with treating the pregnant woman without first obtaining written “informed consent” having provided the client with information on how the massage will be performed and of any associated risks.

ⁱ <https://training.gov.au/>

ⁱⁱ AAMT Code of Ethics & Standards of Practice

ⁱⁱⁱ AAMT Pregnancy Massage Guidelines

^{iv} Victorian Department of Health on behalf of the Australian Ministers Advisory Council, 2015