MASSAGE THERAPY FOR ESSENTIAL TREMOR: QUIETING THE MIND

INTRODUCTION
Essential tremor (ET) is a neurological disorder causing rhythmic shaking of part of the body. The condition is known to have an inheritable tendency and can present in more than one family member, known as familial tremor. Treatment of the disorder is commonly by way of prescription medication. ET is progressive and in its mildest form can be sensed and/or observed when performing simple motor skills or activities of daily living. Stress and anxiety is a major contributor to the intensification of this tremor.

METHODS
Symptom management recommendations. Drawings of an Archimedes spiral for comparison pre- and post-treatment provided an objective, visual representation of tremor intensity affecting fine motor control. Goniometric measurements were taken to mark changes in cervical range of motion.

The study period included five consecutive weekly sessions. The subject, a 63-year-old female, included her hands and head as the primary areas affected by ET. The treatment aim was to reduce sympathetic nervous system firing; therefore, the massage techniques implemented were relaxation-based. Methods included Swedish massage, hydrotherapy, myofascial release, diaphragmatic breathing, remedial exercise education and affirmative education and breathing, remedial exercise release, diaphragmatic included Swedish massage, relaxation-based. Methods implemented were the massage techniques system firing; therefore, to reduce sympathetic nervous system firing; therefore.

OBJECTIVE
Evaluate the effects of massage therapy on the severity of ET using an activity-based rating scale pre- and post-treatment.

HYPOTHESIS
Consecutive applications of massage therapy will decrease tremor intensity in clients with ET by providing an involuntary state of relaxation and through the treatment of hypertonic musculature over-stimulated by repetitive movement.

RESULTS
Tremor intensity decreased after each session, demonstrated by improved fine motor skills. Scoring on the WHIGET tremor rating scale consistently decreased post-treatment. The client also reported an increased functionality in cervical range, which was documented during the first and last visits.

CONCLUSION
The results suggest that tremors, symptomatic to ET, can be eased through initiatives that encourage a parasympathetic response. Massage therapy has shown to be a valuable method of treatment for ET. Tremor severity can present in an irregular pattern due to subjective individual triggers; therefore, further controlled research is required to lessen the variability between subjects and to validate these findings.