



American Medical Women's Association
The Vision and Voice of Women in Medicine since 1915

Allopathic and Osteopathic Schools

There are two types of medical schools: allopathic and osteopathic. Allopathic doctors are the traditional Medical Doctors (MDs) and osteopathic doctors are Doctors of Osteopathy (DOs). Both may prescribe medication and perform surgery. The difference between the two lies in the philosophy of these divergent branches of medicine. Allopathic medicine has been around for several centuries; osteopathic medicine was founded in 1874 by Andrew Taylor Still who focused on treating the whole person and not just the ailment he or she presented.

There are [125 allopathic medical schools](#) and [18 osteopathic medical schools](#) in the United States. Their coursework is similar except osteopathic students take a course called Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment (OMT). This course teaches a set of manual medical techniques that may be used to relieve pain, restore range of motion, and enhance the body's ability to heal. In 1999-2000 there were 10,388 students in osteopathic medical schools - 40.2 percent were women. In that same year, there were 66,459 students in allopathic medical schools - 43.8% were women.