The aim of this research was to determine the awareness of massage in the general public.

Other research has shown that there is a positive attitude towards massage among health-care providers, but knowledge is limited (Vervoel & Page, 1998).

How aware and knowledgeable are the Invercargill public about massage?

Participants
A face-to-face survey was conducted outside five Invercargill supermarkets. People were approached until 500 had volunteered to take part. Ethics approval was granted by the Southern Institute of Technology.

Sample Demographics
This chart shows that in our sample a high number of people have had a massage.

If you were female you were more likely to have had a massage.

Our Demographic findings show that nearly two thirds of our participants have had a massage. A high number were female which was possibly due to recruiting outside of supermarkets.

International findings indicate that the likelihood of having had a massage is higher for females (Smith, Sullivan & Baxter, 2010). This suggests our sample may be a good indicator for massage use.

Users & Barriers
The most common perceptions of who used massage therapy were athletes, everyone and those people who were injured.

People who had previously had a massage were more likely to consider massage an appropriate treatment for everyone.

Cost and time were the most mentioned barriers to receiving massage.

Significantly (p=0.02) cost was more of an issue to those who have had a massage.

Those people who have not had a massage were significantly (p<0.01) more likely to consider massage to be unnecessary.

Modalities & Conditions
What conditions do you think could benefit from massage?

Knowledge of massage therapy contraindications
When we look at peoples knowledge of contraindications for massage therapy, we see that in nearly all cases the number of people who consider that massage would be good outweighs those who think massage would be bad.

Neck stiffness was the most recognised indication for massage, followed by muscle strain, lower back pain and stress.

What is preventing you from using massage? (n=486)

What is your awareness of the following massage therapies?
The most commonly stated words associated with massage were relaxing and relaxation.

Shown in the graphic above are answers to the question “What comes to your mind when thinking of massage?” larger text represents words used more often.

Relaxation topped the list for modality awareness, followed by Acupuncture and Beauty Massage.

Limitations
This project is limited in that only 500 people from Invercargill were surveyed. The survey was designed as a broad snapshot of general public awareness and as such detailed analysis was not possible.

Further research needs to be done on a larger scale, with a more equal gender ratio, and a greater number of non-users.

Acknowledgements
We would like to thank the Southern Institute of Technology, for Massage Therapy Students Lewis & Jo Smith and Dr. Cherry Smith for all of our participants for their time and interest.

References