

Expectations of Chiropractic Treatment

As a chiropractor, do you have a different expectation from your treatment than the patient? Thirty-three chiropractors and 336 patients participated in a study to determine the common goals of the therapeutic encounter. In Dr. Hakan Sigrell's paper entitled, "Expectations of Chiropractic Treatment: What Are the Expectations of New Patients Consulting a Chiropractor, and Do Chiropractors and Patients Have Similar Expectations?" there are some surprising results that are important to all practicing chiropractors.

Patients have developed expectations about what should happen in a chiropractic office. Unless there has been a discussion about therapeutic expectations, whereby the chiropractor understands the patient's actual concerns, patient satisfaction may not be achieved. It is very important that the doctor and patient have similar disease concepts and expectations. Patients feel more confidence with chiropractors than medical practitioners partially because of satisfaction with the information given to them.

Patient expectations play a role in patient satisfaction; if expectations are fulfilled, there is a higher rate of satisfaction. Dr. Hakan Sigrell has investigated which expectations are most common among chiropractic patients. The results of his study indicate a high degree of consensus in expectation between chiropractors and patients. The chiropractor should find the problem and explain it to the patient. There was also agreement that the patient should feel better and be free of symptoms. It is important to give the patient a diagnosis.

There were a few surprising results from this study. Patients had lower expectations of the treatment than the chiropractor probably because the chiropractor has more knowledge about the treatment than the patient. The chiropractor is usually more confident than the patient partially because the chiropractor is the last chance after the patient has tried several other forms of treatment. Patients expect advice and exercises and if they don't get what expect, there is a high probability that they will be dissatisfied.

The biggest difference in this study was relative to the number of treatments necessary for the symptom to improve. The general view of the chiropractor was that it will take 3-5 treatments for improvement, whereas, patients expect to be improved in less. Chiropractors view symptoms and treatment as a more complex process.

In conclusion, communication between the chiropractor and the patient is paramount to reduce the differences in expectations for a positive encounter.

References:

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