

Chiropractic

In the past few years, more and more people are agreeing that chiropractic treatments, including spinal manipulative therapy, are effective and a beneficial part of a total health care system. Whereas skeptics once claimed that research to support chiropractic care was non-existent, many are now realizing that this is no longer true and that Doctors of Chiropractic have the expertise to diagnose, treat, and/or manage many health problems. It is also well established that chiropractors will refer to the appropriate medical specialist or health care practitioner if necessary. In actuality, chiropractic is the RIGHT CHOICE when you want conservative treatment that stresses wellness and does not employ drugs or surgery.

EDUCATION

Doctors of chiropractic are not only trained in problems dealing with the spine, but are formally educated in clinical examination and diagnosis of the entire human body. Doctors of Chiropractic have training comparable to medical or osteopathic doctors in the basic sciences, including anatomy, physiology, pathology, etc. A report by Meredith Gonyea, Ph.D., President of the Center for Studies in Health Policy, Inc., found that among all health care professions, “only D.C.’s (Doctors of Chiropractic), DO’s (Doctors of Osteopathy) and MD’s (Medical Doctors) focus on health care interventions for the well being of the whole person.” Dr. Gonyea concluded that “the D.C. can be considered a generalist in the provision of primary health care services and a specialist in the use of chiropractic treatment methods. The method of practice is similar to the M.D. or D.O. who provides generalist primary care services and is a specialist in internal medicine.”

EFFECTIVENESS

Chiropractors are no longer the only ones claiming that chiropractic works. Ph.D.s, M.D.s even government agencies are agreeing that the care chiropractors provide is effective for many conditions. In England, Dr. T.W. Meade compared the effectiveness of chiropractic treatment to hospital outpatient treatment of mechanical low back pain. Dr. Meade found the “chiropractic was more effective than hospital outpatient management, mainly for patients with chronic or severe back pain...The benefit of chiropractic treatment became more evident throughout the follow-up period (two years). Secondary outcome measures also showed that chiropractic was more beneficial.” For patients with low back pain in whom manipulation is not contraindicated, chiropractic almost certainly confers worthwhile, long-term benefit in comparison with hospital outpatient management.”

A study, funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and conducted by Pran Manga, Ph.D., was done to determine, among other things, the efficacy of chiropractic’s management of low back pain (LBP). Dr. Manga found the “on the evidence, particularly the most scientifically valid clinical studies, spinal manipulation applied by chiropractors is shown to be more effective than alternative treatments for LBP.” Based on his findings, Dr. Manga recommended that the Ontario Ministry of Health fully integrate chiropractic into its health care system. Dr. Manga also found that “there is no clinical or case-control study that demonstrates or even implies that chiropractic spinal manipulation is unsafe in the treatment of low-back pain...There is also some evidence in the literature to suggest that spinal manipulations are less safe and less effective when performed by non-chiropractic professionals.”

The U.S. Government has also taken a giant step in support of spinal manipulation. In December 1994, the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR), an arm of the Department of Health and Human Services, published and announced its new clinical practice guideline for the treatment of acute low back problems in adults. The guideline was developed by a multidisciplinary team that reviewed relevant scientific research on LBP treatments. The AHCPR Guideline panel found that “for patients with acute low back symptoms without radiculopathy (disease of the spinal nerve roots), the scientific evidence suggests spinal manipulation is effective in reducing pain and perhaps speeding recovery within the first month of symptoms.” The panel goes on to recommend spinal manipulation as a first line of treatment for low back problems.”

Shortly after the launching of the U.S. Guideline, the British National Health Service announced its new guideline on back pain, developed by the Clinical Standards Advisory Group (CSAG). Like the U.S. panel, the British panel found “there is now evidence that manipulation is an effective method of providing symptomatic relief for some patients...The British panel recommends an early conservative intervention for back pain to prevent chronic pain condition or other potential complications.

BEYOND THE BACK

Research has found that chiropractic treatment is effective for more than just back pain. For example, a study conducted to compare chiropractic treatment versus drug therapy (amitriptyline) for the treatment of chronic tension type headache, showed that though both offered relief during the treatment period, 82% of the drug therapy group suffered from adverse side effects, including dry mouth, drowsiness and weight gain, while the chiropractic group

had virtually no side effects. Additionally, the chiropractic group showed continued therapeutic benefit four weeks after therapy had ended; the patients in the drug group were back to the same headache frequency and severity as their baseline values. Patrick D. Boline, D.C., the principle investigator, concluded, “the results of this study show that spinal manipulative therapy is an effective treatment for tension headaches.”

A randomized pilot study on chiropractic spinal manipulative treatment for primary dysmenorrhea (menstrual cramps) found that “immediately after treatment, the perception of pain and the level of menstrual distress were significantly reduced by SMT (Spinal Manipulative Therapy). A larger, randomized clinical trial by the same researchers is currently underway that will further evaluate these results.

Research is currently being done to investigate chiropractic’s effectiveness for asthma, infantile colic, otitis media (ear infection), hypertension (high blood pressure), scoliosis (curvature of the spine), carpal tunnel syndrome, and migraine headaches, among others.

TREATMENT FOR TOTAL WELL BEING

Apart from spinal manipulation, Doctors of Chiropractic take the time to counsel their patients in the prevention of disease and the methods for living a health lifestyle. A survey of chiropractors in medically underserved rural America showed that “one hundred percent of those responding noted that they provide guidance on exercise to their patients. Additionally 94% of the chiropractors surveyed responded that they counsel patients on lifestyle modification (smoking cessation, weight loss etc), while 88% offer nutritional advice to patients.”

A related survey of chiropractic patients in rural America revealed the “survey respondents report satisfaction with: (1) their chiropractic treatment in general (over 99% satisfied to very satisfied); (2) their ability to see the doctor in a reasonable amount of time when care is needed (99% good to very good); (3) their access to a chiropractor in an emergency situation (98% good to very good); (4) the contribution of chiropractic care to their living a healthier, more fit lifestyle (99% somewhat to definitely).

Respondents believe that, as a result of their chiropractic care: (5) their physical problem or condition has improved (98% somewhat to definitely); (6) they have less pain (99% somewhat to definitely); (7) they are taking less medication (71% yes); and finally (8) their overall health has improved since first receiving chiropractic care (87% better to much better).”

SUMMING UP

By seeking chiropractic care, you have made the right choice for your health. Doctors of Chiropractic are able to diagnose many diseases and disorders, and will refer you to another practitioner if need be. Millions of people worldwide choose chiropractic care for natural well-being. LET CHIROPRACTIC BE THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR YOU!