

Chiropractic Wellness Care: What are the benefits?

Exciting NEW Research!!

The vast majority of patients who visit a chiropractic physician come in, get treated, get well, and it's over. Patients are then released from care, and they return to the office when they hurt again, treated typically within 2-12 visits for the next episode. Many patients however chose to transition to a monthly wellness program. The question is, "What are the benefits of ongoing monthly care?"

Exciting new research has been accepted for publication in the prestigious peer-reviewed journal, Spine. The authors sought to determine the effectiveness of maintenance spinal manipulation in long-term reduction of pain and disability levels associated with chronic low-back conditions after an initial phase of treatments. They found that compared to those who receive no follow-up treatment after an injury, ***only those who receive maintenance/monthly spinal adjustment showed improvement in pain and disability scores at the ten-month evaluation.***ⁱ Furthermore, in the group that received no maintenance care the mean pain and disability scores returned back near to their pretreatment level.

In other words...maintenance/wellness works!!! Without ongoing care, patients did worse.

Other important research...

There were two papers published in 2004ⁱⁱ and 2007ⁱⁱⁱ, authored by a medical physician and chiropractic physician (Sarnat and Winterstein) which studied the effects of chiropractic management. After gathering and analyzing seven years of data they found that chiropractic users experienced:

- 85% lower pharmaceutical costs (the number one cost drive in the system)**
- 60% fewer hospitalizations
- 62% fewer surgical cases,
- Less out-patient diagnostic tests (MRI, CT, blood work, etc.)
- Improved satisfaction reported by patients.

A 2004 case study examined the potential role of maintenance chiropractic spinal manipulation to reduce overall pain and disability levels associated with chronic low-back conditions after an initial phase of intensive chiropractic treatments. The results of this nine-month study demonstrated that for disability only the group that was given spinal manipulations during the follow-up period maintained their post-intensive treatment scores. The disability scores of the other group went back to their pretreatment levels^{iv}.

A case study published in 2005 also studied the issue of maintenance care and found improvement in quality of life while showing signs suggestive of improved spinal function^v.

A study by Rupert in 2000 was designed to obtain information regarding multiple health issues of patients age 65 and over who have had a **long-term regimen of chiropractic health promotion and preventive care**. The authors concluded: “The total annual cost of health care services for the patients receiving maintenance care was conservatively 1/3 of the expense made by US citizens of the same age.”^{vi}

A paper published in Top Clinical Chiropractic in 1996 was designed to assess characteristics of older patients who seek chiropractic care^{vii}. The results were significant. Patients who utilize chiropractic physicians were:

- Less likely to have been hospitalized
- Less likely to have used a nursing home
- More likely to report a better health status,
- More likely to exercise vigorously
- More likely to be mobile in the community
- Less likely to use prescription drugs

ⁱ Spine. 2011 Jan 17. [Epub ahead of print] Does maintained Spinal manipulation therapy for chronic non-specific low back pain result in better long term outcome? Senna MK, Machaly SA. Rheumatology and Rehabilitation Department, Mansoura Faculty of Medicine, Mansoura University.

ⁱⁱ Concept-Using DC as your PCP: Sarnat, MD, Winterstein, DC, Clinical and Cost Outcomes of An Integrative Medicine IPA, JMPT 2004;27:336-47

ⁱⁱⁱ Concept-Using DC as your PCP: Sarnat, MD, Winterstein, DC, Cambron, DC. Clinical Utilization and Cost Outcomes From An Integrative Medicine Independent Physician Association: An Additional 3-Year Update. JMPT 2007;30:263-269

^{iv} Descarreaux et al. Efficacy of preventive spinal manipulation for chronic low-back pain and related disabilities: a preliminary study. JMPT 2004 Oct;27(8):509-14.

^v Wenban AB, Nielsen MK. Chiropractic maintenance care and quality of life of a patient presenting with chronic low back pain. JMPT 2005 Feb;28(2):136-42.

^{vi} Maintenance Care: Health Promotion Services Administered to US Chiropractic Patients Aged 65 and Older, Part II, Rupert, Manello, Sandefur, JMPT, Vol 23, No. 1, January 2000, pp. 10-19.

^{vii} Coulter, Hurwitz, Aronow, Cassata, Beck, Chiropractic Patients in a Comprehensive Home-Based Geriatric Assessment, Follow-up and Health Promotion Program, Top Clin Chiro 1996; 3(2):46-55, 1996