

# More People Utilize And Are Satisfied With Chiropractors

Research is showing that more and more people are using chiropractic to regain and maintain their health and they are very satisfied with the care they are receiving. Following is some recent research that supports this conclusion.

According to the November / December 2001 issue of the *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*, patient satisfaction surveys show that people are very happy with their experience at their chiropractor's office; 83.3% rated their experience as excellent. An astounding 92.5% stated they would definitely recommend their chiropractor to others.

The February 1, 2002 issue of *Spine* reports that the number of people utilizing the wellness disciplines for their health care has greatly increased. In 1990, 34% of Americans utilized wellness care from outside mainstream medical care. By 1997, this percentage increased to 42%. In 1997, chiropractic accounted for 31% of those visits. This represents a 100% increase in the number of people seeing chiropractors in the last 20 years.

The May 1997 issue of the *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics* reports that "patients positively endorsed all items on the satisfaction questionnaire, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the care they received."

A study reported as far back as the January 1993 issue of the same journal concluded "Patients expressed high levels of satisfaction with their doctors and the care they received. Although women were slightly more satisfied than men, other patient characteristics such as level of education, income, employment status or previous chiropractic care did not influence [patient's] response [to the surveys]."

Commentary: Chiropractic care is being used by more and more people every day, is effective and everyone is very satisfied with it regardless of their social, educational or economic status. Share the word with your friends and family about the benefits you and your family have experienced under chiropractic care.

## ■ Chiropractic patients use medical services less

The June 1996 issue of *Topics in Clinical Chiropractic* reports that older patients who use chiropractic health care services end up using less medical services such as hospitals, nursing homes and prescription drugs.

In a study of geriatrics by the Rand Corporation it was found that 96% of the population studied who use chiropractic had not used nursing home services in the three years before the study. 81% of those who had not received chiropractic care didn't need the use of a nursing home, a 15% less nursing home usage by the chiropractic patients.

In hospital use, chiropractic patients fared even better. 74% of the people under chiropractic care did not need the use of a hospital in the three years prior to the study versus 53% of the study group not under chiropractic care; a 21% difference.

87% of those patients under chiropractic care perceived themselves to be in good to excellent health. Only 68% of those not under chiropractic care thought their health good to excellent. Put simply, chiropractic works. ▲



## Patient satisfaction higher with Chiropractors than others

A study published in the October, 1995 *New England Journal of Medicine* finds that patients are much more satisfied with the care given them by their Chiropractor than those who went to medical doctors were with their care.

42% of those patients who went to a Chiropractor for low back pain rated their care as “excellent” while only 27% of those who went to a medical doctor for the same problem rated their care as high. The Chiropractic patients also reported more satisfaction with their histories, examination and explanation of what was causing their problem.

The study also found that medical doctors were more inclined to order more expensive CT scans and MRIs. ▲

## ■ Chiropractic risks: What does the evidence say?

Ian Coulter, Ph.D. is the author of an article in the September 1998 issue of the journal *Integrative Medicine* that examines the risks associated with Chiropractic care. The article, entitled "Efficacy and Risks of Chiropractic Manipulation: What Does the Evidence Suggest?" points out some interesting facts:

- Chiropractors perform more than **90%** of spinal manipulations. (Manipulation is the generic, non-specific medical term for Adjustment).
- The risk of complication with cervical (neck) adjustments is **6.39 per 10 million** adjustments.
- The risk of complication with lumbar (low back) adjustments is **1 in 100 million** adjustments.

The risk of complication in some common medical procedures and medications were not near as good:

- The risk of complication with the use of NSAIDS (aspirin, Tylenol, ibuprofen, etc.) is **3.2 in 1000**.
- The risk of complication in cervical spine surgeries is **15.6 in 1000**.

By way of commentary, there has been a lot of news about the dangers of Chiropractic care over the past few months. This article clearly points out that Chiropractic procedures are significantly safer than many common medical procedures. For the best reflection of how safe Chiropractic is, ask your Chiropractor how much his/her malpractice insurance costs. Then ask your medical doctor the same question. The difference will surprise you. ▲

## ■ Integrating chiropractic care into health care system will reduce overall costs

A paper presented at the *1999 World Federation of Chiropractic Bi-Annual Assembly* reports that integrating chiropractic care into the health care system will lower overall costs. The paper was authored by Pran Manga, Ph.D. of the University of Ottawa in Ottawa, Canada.

According to Manga, "Chiropractic care is a cost-effective alternative to other professions' management of neuromusculoskeletal [NMS] conditions. It is also safer, increasingly accepted by the public as reflected in the growing [use] and high patient retention rates and there is much and repeated evidence that patients prefer chiropractic over other forms of care for the more common musculoskeletal conditions. The integration of chiropractic into the health care system should serve to reduce health care costs, improve accessibility to needed care, and improve health outcomes."

Manga also found that when studies compare the cost of chiropractic care with other disciplines "it is essential to include and [add up] all relevant treatment costs for the entire episode of illness or injury." A problem in some cost effectiveness studies, Manga says, is that the entire cost of the medical care is not included in the study. "Medical management is a lot more complex and costly involving one or more (and frequently repeat) prescription drugs, referrals to other caregivers including specialists and physiotherapists, several diagnostic tests, diagnostic imaging and sometimes hospitalization as well."

Since chiropractors tend to do most of the work themselves in the care of their patients, "the cost of chiropractic care [reported in studies] is likely to be all inclusive and accurate, whereas the cost of medical management of NMS cases is more likely to be understated." ▲

## ■ Chiropractic instruction helps prevent work injuries

A 1998 study reported in the journal *Australasian Chiropractic & Osteopathy* [issue 7(1);8-14] found that when chiropractors educated a group of manual-labor workers about proper spinal care, the average cost of work related spinal injuries dropped significantly.

Sixty workers were divided into two groups, one of which received a two hour educational training class conducted by a chiropractor. The other group received no instruction whatsoever. The training involved instruction in spinal anatomy, proper lifting, exercises, what causes back pain and injury and treatment options.

**In the six months before the training, the average cost of spinal injury cases was \$451.00. In the six months after the training program, the average cost per case dropped 40% to \$269. ▲**

# The Chiropractic Role In Emergency Response

The April 19, 2004 issue of the Journal of Vertebral Subluxation Research provides us with an interesting article on the emergency response of chiropractors and the ensuing coordination efforts with government agencies in New York and Washington, DC after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

In the afternoon after the attacks, New York area chiropractors began showing up at the scene as the recovery process got underway. Initially, the chiropractors had to talk their way past security barricades and set up their adjusting tables wherever they could, often in the streets around Ground Zero. Similar efforts were also underway in Washington, DC.

Eventually, through the efforts of the New York Chiropractic Council and the International Chiropractors Association (ICA) an alliance with the American Red Cross allowed full access credentials to the chiropractic volunteers. The NY Council and the ICA established a huge network of chiropractors known as the Chiropractic Relief Effort at Ground Zero and the Pentagon.

How successful were the efforts? In New York, at the five official sites manned around the clock, 1,500 chiropractors donated \$1.5 million in services by adjusting up to 500 people per day during the formal chiropractic relief effort beginning September 28, 2001 through May 30, 2002 when all Ground Zero work was completed.

The Red Cross evaluation of the effort concluded “the most ‘successful’ volunteers...were those who were able to work with minimal supervision by official emergency workers. Far from requiring supervision, the chiropractor required only space in which to work and some pallets on which to place his [adjusting table]. In other words, the incorporation of these volunteers into the response required little or no effort on the part of emergency managers...”

The report goes on to say that chiropractors “allied themselves with the Red Cross initially in order to maintain access to the facility, but they were able to offer a specific skill, which even if not planned for in advance, seemed useful to those who already

## ■ Chiropractic Care Improves Quality Of Life In Chronic Low Back Pain Patient

The February 2005 issue of the Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics reports on an interesting study that found a 26 year-old woman with chronic low back pain who utilized chiropractic care on a long term, maintenance basis experienced improvements in her quality of life measurements.

Before her care program began, she was given a number of tests that measure quality of life factors. The tests included the Short-Form-36 Health Survey questionnaire (SF-36), the Quality of Well-Being Scale, Visual Analog Scales (VAS) of pain intensity and ranges of movement and the number of tender spots over the spine.

After 9 months of chiropractic care she was retested. The SF-36 physical score improved from 23.4 to 43.7 and the SF-36 mental scores improved from 25.3 to 62.8.

The Quality of Well-Being Scale score improved from a mean score of 1.1 before care began to a mean score of 8.2 after.

The Visual Analog Scale improved from a score of 8 before care to 1.5 after and the mean number of tender spots over the spine decreased from 6.5 to 4.

In this case, the patient showed not only improvement in spinal function but in Quality of Life issues as well. The authors concluded that the improvements this patient experienced justify further research into the possible causal relationship between factors that indicate vertebral subluxation and quality of life.

# Chiropractic Care Changes Spinal Muscle Activity

The September 2005 issue of the Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics reports patients receiving chiropractic adjustments experienced significant changes in their spinal muscle activity.

The study involved 16 patients from two chiropractic offices. Surface electromyography (SEMG) was used to measure muscle activity before and after the adjustments.

After the patients were adjusted, muscle activity decreased by at least 25% in 24 of the 31 sites that were monitored. In 4 sites there was a more than 25% increase in muscle activity. There was less than 25% change in only 3 sites.

The authors concluded that chiropractic adjustments induce an almost immediate change, usually a reduction, in spinal muscle activity. In some cases, they noted the muscle activity increased and then usually decreased to a level lower than the levels before they were adjusted.

Commentary: It comes as no surprise that changes in muscle activity, increases or decreases, occur after the administration of an adjustment. As the process of spinal correction begins, some muscles in the spine will be required to work more and others to work less. As the correction process continues toward a more normal balance, muscle activity is more inclined to return to levels that are lower than when a spinal problem existed.

This study documents the changes in muscle activity that occur as spinal problems are corrected and normal function returns.