



Flu Prevention Plan Should Include Chiropractic

People of all ages are encouraged to add chiropractic to their strategy for warding off and fighting the flu and its effects – swine flu or otherwise. Spinal adjustments can have a positive effect on immune function according to a growing number of researchers who are exploring the common denominators in disease processes, and the role of the nervous, immune, and hormonal systems in development of immune related illnesses.

Atlanta, GA, May 04, 2009 --(PR.com)-- Chiropractic corrects spinal abnormalities called vertebral subluxations that result in interference of the nervous system. Since the nervous system controls all functions of the body -- including the immune system -- chiropractic care can have a positive effect on immune function.

“Contemporary research is beginning to shed light on the neurobiological mechanisms which may explain the outstanding clinical results chiropractors have experienced when managing patients with viral and infectious diseases,” stated Dr. Christopher Kent, Co- Founder of Chiropractic Leadership Alliance.

Dr. Kent explained: “A comprehensive review of the research literature reveals the current understanding that the brain and immune system are the two major adaptive systems in the body. During an immune response, the brain and the immune system 'talk to each other' and this process is essential for maintaining homeostasis or balance in the body.”

Since its inception, chiropractic has asserted that viruses and microbes don't threaten us all equally and that a healthy immune system easily repels most invaders. The immune system protects us from the flu, as well as any other infectious disease, and strives to get us well again when we do fall ill. Our immune system, like every other system in the body, is coordinated and controlled by the nervous system.

Chiropractors are also aware of the importance of positive health life style practices (rest, drinking ample quantities of water, diet, exercise, proper diet, use of multivitamins and minerals, and stress reduction approaches) that can also positively influence the nervous system and immune response. According to a large study of the chiropractic profession recently conducted by the Institute for Social Research, Ohio Northern University (McDonald et al., 2003), chiropractors also customarily advise their patients as to the benefits of these other modalities in optimizing overall health.

Chiropractors helping patients battle the flu is not a new occurrence either. During the 1917-18 influenza epidemic, which brought death and fear to many Americans, it has been estimated that 20 million people died throughout the world, including about 500,000 Americans. It was chiropractic's success in caring for flu victims that led to the profession's licensure in many states.

Researchers reported that in Davenport, Iowa, out of the 93,590 patients treated by medical doctors, there were 6,116 deaths -- a loss of one patient out of every 15. Chiropractors at the Palmer School of Chiropractic adjusted 1,635 cases, with only one death. Outside Davenport, chiropractors in Iowa cared for 4,735 cases with only six deaths -- one out of 866. During the same epidemic, in Oklahoma, out of



3,490 flu patients under chiropractic care, there were only seven deaths. Furthermore, chiropractors were called in 233 cases given up as lost after medical treatment, and reportedly saved all but 25. In another report covering 4,193 cases by 213 chiropractors 4,104 showed complete recovery.

“These results are not so surprising given what we now know about the interaction between the nervous system and the immune system” stated Matthew McCoy DC, MPH, Editor of the Journal of Pediatric, Maternal & Family Health - Chiropractic. “Through research we know that chiropractic has beneficial effects on immunoglobulins, B-lymphocytes (white blood cells), pulmonary function and other immune system processes.”

One such study, conducted by Patricia Brennan Ph.D and her team, found that when a chiropractic “manipulation” was applied to the middle back, the response of polymorphonuclear neutrophils (white blood cells) taken from blood collected 15 minutes after the manipulation was significantly higher than blood collected 15 minutes before and 30 and 45 minutes after the chiropractic procedure. This research demonstrated an “enhanced respiratory burst” following the chiropractic adjustment. This “burst” is needed for our immune cells to destroy invading viruses and bacteria.

Another small study of HIV positive patients was conducted to study the effects of specific chiropractic adjustments to correct vertebral subluxations in the upper neck on the immune systems of HIV positive individuals. Over the six-month period of the study, the group that did not receive chiropractic care experienced a 7.96% decrease in CD4 cell counts, while the adjusted group experienced a 48% increase in CD4 cell counts over the same period.

A large retrospective study conducted by Robert Blanks Ph.D and colleagues studied 2,818 individuals undergoing chiropractic care - these individuals reported an average overall improvement, ranging from 7-28%, in a battery of physical symptoms including stiffness/lack of flexibility in the spine, physical pain, fatigue, incidence of colds and flu, headaches, menstrual discomfort, gastrointestinal disorders, allergies, dizziness and falls (Blanks et al., 1997, Journal of Vertebral Subluxation Research).

More importantly, the incidence of colds and flu was reduced by an average of 15% in this large population who were undergoing regular chiropractic care.

“In addition to the passive recommendations regarding hand washing, avoiding large gatherings, coughing and sneezing into your hands - it makes a great deal of sense to do everything you can to ensure that your immune system is functioning at its best. And that strategy should include chiropractic care,” stated Dr. McCoy.

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