

Chiropractic Adjustments May Heal Anxiety

A study, published in *The Journal of Vertebral Subluxation Research (JVSJR)* found that a patient's anxiety symptoms, including headaches, were reduced after chiropractic adjustments were made on her spine.

The study described a 19-year-old female experiencing symptoms of dizziness, trembling, sweating, heart palpitations, and sleep deprivation. She was diagnosed with general anxiety disorder and was prescribed paroxetine hydrochloride by her neurologist. This medication produced side effects and minor relief, resulting in decreased quality of life.

"This young woman spent 2 years in crisis, going from emergency room to private specialist, spending thousands of dollars for tests and drug therapy without any resolution of her problems,"

says Madeline Behrendt, DC.

A chiropractic evaluation conducted a year later, complete with exams and EMG scans, revealed evidence of chronic vertebral subluxations in multiple locations, and altered spinal curves in cervical and thoracic areas.

"A simple, noninvasive spinal screening ultimately provided the findings that made the difference: her spine was subluxated, impinging on nerves, and altering the proper function of her nervous system," Behrendt says.

After a 4-month course of chiropractic care, including adjustments to specific vertebra to promote restoration of proper nerve function, the patient's anxiety symptoms were reduced by 80%, including a 90% decrease in her headaches.

Chronic Back Pain May Shrink the Brain

A study conducted by researchers at Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill, has found that chronic back pain may age the part of the brain responsible for memory and information processing by up to 20 years.

"By definition, chronic back pain is a state of persistent pain associated with negative mood and stress," says A. Vania Apkarian, PhD, lead researcher, associate professor of physiology at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine, and a researcher at the Northwestern University Institute for Neuroscience. "Therefore, one possible explanation for the decreased gray matter is that nerve cells are working overtime."

According to Apkarian, loss in brain density is related to pain duration, indicating that 1.3 cm³ of gray matter are lost for every year of chronic pain. In addition, although chronic back pain negatively impacts quality of life and increases anxiety and depression, it is assumed that any changes to the brain revert to a normal state after the chronic pain stops.

In the study, Apkarian and colleagues used structural magnetic resonance

Survey Shows Need for Drugless Options

A recent survey (released by the Kaiser Family Foundation, the US Agency for Health Care Research and Quality, and the Harvard School of Public Health) found that nearly half of all Americans are concerned about the safety of medical care they receive.

"Americans too often choose to pop a pill or seek out elective surgery to treat health problems that could just as effectively and more safely be managed by less invasive and/or nondrug options," says ACA President Donald J. Krippendorf, DC. "Even over-the-counter pain relievers can have dangerous side effects, such as liver damage, internal bleeding, or even death, which many consumers are unaware of. It is time for a paradigm shift toward safer and more natural health care."

According to the ACA, chiropractic care is one of the safest health care options available today, boasts high patient-satisfaction ratings,

and has been shown to be more effective than medication at treating conditions ranging from back pain to headaches.

A recent study in the *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics* found chiropractic care to be more effective than medical care at treating chronic low back pain. Another study conducted by the Duke University Evidence-Based Practice Center found cervical or neck manipulations are appropriate for treating both tension and cervicogenic headaches, a tension headache that is associated with specific neck symptoms.

"If more patients with musculoskeletal complaints were encouraged to utilize scientifically supported interventions, such as those frequently utilized by doctors of chiropractic, many unnecessary hospital stays, surgeries, dangerous medications and high costs they generate could be avoided," says Krippendorf.

imaging brain scan data and two automated analysis techniques to compare 26 healthy volunteers with 26 patients

who were experiencing chronic pain in the lumbosacral region for more than 1 year.

Researchers found that sufferers of chronic pain lost about 5% to 11% of gray matter per year (the same as 10 to 20 years of aging).

Researchers hypothesize that atrophy of brain circuitry dictates pain. As atrophy of the brain progresses, the pain condition becomes more irreversible and less responsive to therapy.

