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Improvement in a Child with Autism Following Chiropractic

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In the July 6, 2017, issue of the Journal of Pediatric, Maternal & Family Health is a case report documenting the improvement of autism symptoms in a child after undergoing chiropractic care. The study describes autism spectrum disorder (ASD) as a set of developmental disabilities that can lead to significant social, behavioral and communication restrictions.

The word spectrum refers to a variety of symptoms associated with autism which affect skills at various levels of impairment. The number of ASD diagnosed children is increasing world-wide. In the U.S., it is estimated that the number of children with ASD is 1 in 68. This has increased over a four year period from what was estimated at 1 in 88 children. This problem is much more prevalent in boys as the numbers show that at the age of eight, approximately 1 in 42 boys have ASD compared to 1 in 189 girls.

ASD adds a financial burden to both parents and schools. It is estimated that the yearly increase in medical costs for a child with ASD is \$3,020.00, while the increased cost to educate a child with ASD is \$8,610.00 more per child per year. On average, mothers with children with ASD are forced to work less, costing them about 28% of the income they would have earned.

According to the study, the diagnosis for ASD is not an exact science as there is no medical test, such as a blood test, to determine this condition. Diagnosis of ASD is made by judgment of the activities and abilities according to certain criteria of the child involved.

In this case, a 6-year-old boy was brought by his mother and father to the chiropractor. The boy had been previously diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder by a neurologist. His parents noticed that he was hindered in his social activities and had become somewhat aggressive. The boy was not sleeping well and would often walk throughout the night. He would rarely eat a full meal and was very picky about his food selections. The boy was put on psychiatric medications by his medical physician for his condition.

The boy's history included a cesarean birth which the parents described as including a lot of pulling and twisting of the baby. In his early years, the boy also had multiple ear infections and took antibiotics for each occurrence. He had his full range of vaccinations as well.

A chiropractic exam was performed which included both static and motion palpation. Due to the boy's condition, the exam process was difficult. A sEMG scan and a thermal scan were also performed. From the exam, it was determined that the boy had subluxations affecting nerve system function.

Specific chiropractic adjustments were started at the rate of three visits per week. Home stretching exercises were also given. During the first week of care, the mother reported that her son had fallen asleep earlier than normal, and had been sleeping later than he normally would. During her son's second week of chiropractic, his mother reported that she had not administered either of the two psychiatric medications since his first week in the clinic. She also noticed an improvement in his behavior, and a week later, his eating improved. As chiropractic care continued, the mother continued to report improvements in all areas of initial concern. At one point, her son had improved to such a point that she threw her son's medications into the trash.

In their conclusion the authors noted, "This case study demonstrates the reduction of ASD symptoms and impairments with the use of subluxation-based chiropractic care." They explained how chiropractic helped by saying, "As chiropractic care does not treat any disease, this study can further connect possible vertebral subluxation effects on the nervous system of ASD patients."

