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Migraine Headaches and Chiropractic

By William Owens and Mark Studin | April 2010

Thousands of people in the United States suffer with headaches and many do not realize there are different types of headaches that are a reaction to a variety of causes. One of the major tenants of Chiropractic is to find the cause of the problem instead of chasing symptoms. Although Migraine headaches are truly caused by changes in the flow of blood in the brain, many people refer to any headache that is severe enough to negatively affect their day a “migraine”. Many of these cases are people who have headaches on a regular basis, and for whatever reason, they slowly get worse over time. This usually results in increases in medication dosage, prescription of more dangerous drugs with more side-effects and decreases in quality of life. The research paper being reviewed stated “The estimated costs of migraines in the United States is over \$17 billion per annum [year]”. (p 91)

This research study that was published in 2000 was titled “A randomize controlled trial of chiropractic spinal manipulative therapy for migraine”. This was designed “To assess the efficacy of chiropractic spinal manipulative therapy [Chiropractic Adjustment} in the treatment of migraine”. (p 91). This study followed others that had delivered similar results.

The authors state “However, the level of evidence is steadily increasing to the point where there is now seen to be a moderate level of efficacy for Chiropractic SMT [Spinal Manipulative Therapy/ AKA Chiropractic Adjustment] in the treatment of headaches or migraines” (p95). The paper also reported “The mean number of migraines per month was reduced from 7.6 to 4.1 episodes. The greatest area of improvement was medication use, for which participants were asked to note the use of medication for each episode. A significant number of participants recorded that their medication use had reduced to zero by the end of the 6-month trial”. (p95) Expressed in other terms, 72% of participants reported significant improvement!

When administered by trained Doctor of Chiropractic, adjustments to the neck are safe and effective. This study has also show that Chiropractic care results in the reduction of medication utilization, some of which have significant long term side-effects having a profound effect on your long term health. Chiropractic chooses to use a safe and scientifically effective approach to the management of migraine headaches and if you are suffering, Chiropractic care is just what the doctor ordered!