

Patient Update

Update 13

CHIROPRACTIC MAINTENANCE CARE

Recent surveys show that more than 90% of chiropractors believe that regular (maintenance) chiropractic care can minimize recurrence or exacerbation of pain and symptoms. However the majority of chiropractors agree that adequate research on this topic is lacking.

The goal of a recently published randomised clinical trial was to explore the idea that maintenance chiropractic care can help reduce disability levels in patients with long standing spinal problems.

The authors conducted a 10-month long study in which 2 groups of patients first received 12 chiropractic treatments during the initial month. The first group then, after the initial intensive 1-month period, received no treatment in the subsequent 9-month period. However, the second of the two groups received chiropractic care once every 3 weeks for the remaining 9 months of the study. It was hypothesized that both groups would reduce their pain and disability scores after the initial phase of treatment but that only patients receiving maintenance care would maintain their initial benefits during the next 9 months.

For both groups, the pain and disability levels decreased after the intensive phase of care. Both groups maintained lower pain score levels throughout the follow-up period. **For the disability scores, however, only the group that was given spinal adjustments during the follow-up period maintained their improved scores. The disability scores of the other group went back to their pre-study levels.**

The authors concluded,

“This experiment suggests that maintenance spinal manipulations after intensive manipulative care may be beneficial to patients to maintain improved post-treatment disability levels.”