

Survey: Chiropractic Care Outperforms All Other Back Pain Treatments, Including Medication

ACA Suggests Conservative Care Before Prescription Drug Use

In a new survey, chiropractic care outperformed all other back-pain treatments including prescription and over-the-counter medications, deep-tissue massage, yoga and Pilates. According to the American Chiropractic Association (ACA), this news reinforces the use of conservative care options as a first line of defense against pain.

The survey, released by a leading consumer product rating and survey publisher in late July, found that 65 percent of those surveyed using chiropractic care for back pain said it helped a lot. Only 53 percent of respondents using prescription medications found them as helpful.

Additionally, about half of those surveyed who are using deep-tissue massage, yoga or Pilates said those treatments helped a lot, and only 28 percent of respondents using over-the-counter medications reported that they helped a lot.

Current evidence-based guidelines support the use of conservative care such as chiropractic for conditions such as chronic lower back pain. In 2007, the Annals of Internal Medicine published low back pain guidelines developed by the American Pain Society and the American College of Physicians. Those guidelines recommended that, for patients who do not improve with self-care, doctors should consider non-pharmacologic therapies such as chiropractic care, massage therapy and acupuncture.

The issue of pain relief has gained visibility recently with the release of a government report which found that while the use of some illegal drugs has diminished, the abuse of prescription medications has sharply increased--particularly prescription opioid pain relievers such as Oxycontin and Vicodin. The report points out that unintentional opioid overdoses (once almost exclusively the fate of heroin abusers) are today increasingly caused by prescription painkiller abuse.

"As this latest survey helps to demonstrate, chiropractic care is an evidence-based and effective treatment that can prevent patients from resorting to powerful drugs with potentially harmful consequences," said ACA President Dr. Rick McMichael. "I urge health care providers, whenever possible, to recommend drug-free, conservative care interventions for their patients before prescribing medications that may be associated with negative side effects. Patients deserve to know their options."

Doctors of chiropractic provide drug-free, non-invasive treatment for many types of painful conditions, including acute and chronic back pain, neck pain, joint pain and headaches. For more information about chiropractic care, or to find a doctor of chiropractic near you, visit the American Chiropractic Association's website.

The American Chiropractic Association (ACA), based in Arlington, Va., is the largest professional association in the United States representing doctors of chiropractic. ACA promotes the highest standards of patient care and ethics, and supports research that contributes to the health and well-being of millions of chiropractic patients. Visit www.acatoday.org.