# EVIDENCE BASED MEDICAL RESEARCH THAT SUPPORTS MOBILIZATION/MANIPULATION:

#### **GENERAL EVIDENCE:**

Spinal manipulation/mobilization, in <u>stark</u> contrast to prescription medication, has been experimentally demonstrated to be a safe and efficacious intervention for the treatment of acute, sub-acute (<u>51</u>) and chronic spinal pain (45,46,65) as it normalizes chronically dysfunctional motion segments at the skeletal level (<u>68</u>). In fact, in a randomized controlled trial, Dabbs and Lauretti concluded that spinal manipulation was several hundred times safer than prescription NSAIDS and was just as efficacious for the treatment of spinal pain. (65)

In other "randomized controlled trials" (which are considered "to be the strongest scientific proof of the effectiveness of an intervention" (47) and "generally accepted as the paradigm of intervention research..." (48)), spinal manipulation/mobilization has been demonstrated to be more efficacious than Medication (49-54), Physical therapy (51,55,52,53,80), Acupuncture (49,50,56), Physician Visit with booklet (57-59,80), Hospital Outpatient Management, (60,61) Exercise (62,55,80) and Placebo (58,63,52-54,80), in its ability to effectively treat chronic spinal pain.

# DECENT RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIALS THAT SUPPORT MANIPULATION/MOBILIZATION:

< <u>Aure et al. 2003</u> | <u>Triano et al. 1995</u> | <u>Muller & Giles 2003</u> | <u>Hoiriis et al. 2004</u> | <u>Niemisto et al. 2003</u> | <u>Koes et al. 1993</u> >

In 2003, AURE et al. randomized forty-nine chronic pain suffering patients into either a spinal manipulation/mobilization group (aka: manual therapy) or a supervised exercise/stretching group. These cohorts were then treated for two months (16 visits) and then followed for one year. The authors concluded "the manual therapy group showed significantly larger improvements than the exercise therapy group on all outcome variables throughout the entire experimental period." More explicitly, the manipulation/mobilization group achieved the following outcomes: 1) a 33mm drop in pain on VAS (versus 17mm in the exercise group), 2) a 9 point improvement on the Dartmouth COOP (versus 4 point in the exercise group); and (3 a 21% improvement in functional disability via Oswestry (versus only 9% in the exercise group). And, maybe even more importantly was the fact that immediately after the two month treatment period, 67% of the manipulation group had returned to work versus only 27% of the exercise group. This statistic was indeed quite impressive! (62)

In 1995, Triano et al. randomized 209 chronic low back pain patients into a manipulation group, a back booklet group, or a placebo manipulation group. They were treated 6 times per week for two weeks and then reassessed at 4 weeks: The outcome

revealed that patients who received spinal manipulation had a much greater improvement in their level of pain (via VAS) than the other groups. The authors of this randomized placebo-controlled trial concluded "there appears to be clinical value to treatment according to a defined plan using manipulation even in low back pain exceeding 7 weeks' duration.... Greater improvement was noted in pain and activity tolerance in the manipulation group. Immediate benefit from pain relief continued to accrue after manipulation," (58)

In 2003, Muller and Giles published the results of their randomized controlled trial with long-term follow-up. They concluded, "Overall, patients who have chronic mechanical spinal pain syndromes and received spinal manipulation gained significant broad-based beneficial short-term and long-term outcomes." This investigation randomized a group of 109 chronic spine pain patients, who had been suffering back or neck pain for an average of 6.4 years, into on of three treatment groups: a manipulation groups, a medication group (Celebrex or Vioxx), or an acupuncture group. After a nine week course of care, the authors concluded that the manipulation group experienced a much more favorable clinical outcome when compared to either the medication group or the acupuncture group. More explicitly, 27.3% of the manipulation patients became asymptomatic (had no pain); versus only 9.4% of the acupuncture patients and 5% of the medication patients. Even more impressive was the increase in functional ability, as indicated in the Oswestry scores: The manipulation group obtained a 50% improvement; versus only a 5% improvement for the acupuncture group and a 4% improvement in the medication group. Finally, the subjective pain scores also strongly favored the manipulation group: The manipulation group obtained a 50% drop in their VAS scores (self pain intensity rating); versus only a 15% drop in the acupuncture group and 0% drop in the medication group. (56) In 2005, his same cohort was followed for another 12 months; the outcome numbers did not chance, which led the authors to the conclusion the following: " In patients with chronic spinal pain syndromes, spinal manipulation, if not contraindicated, may be the only treatment modality of the assessed regimens (acupuncture & prescription medication) that provides broad and significant long-term benefit." (50)

In 2004 HOIriis et al. published a randomized double-blind placebo-controlled trial that investigated the efficacy of manipulation, muscle relaxants, and placebo as an intervention for the treatment of low back pain. One-hundred and ninety two patients suffering low back pain were randomized into one of the aforementioned groups. The results indicated that manipulation was more effective at reducing pain and the patient's 'Clinical Global Impression of Severity Scale' (GIS) than either placebo or muscle relaxants; the authors concluded "Chiropractic was more beneficial than placebo in reducing pain and more beneficial than either placebo or muscle relaxants in reducing GIS." (54)

With the addition of supervised spinal stabilizing exercises into the Chiropractic treatment protocol, which is well within the scope of Chiropractors (99), the effect of spinal manipulation is even more efficacious for the treatment of chronic spine pain

(64,59):

In 2003 Niemisto et al. released a large randomized-controlled trial that randomized 204 chronic low back pain patients into either a spinal manipulation with stabilization exercise group or a medical doctor consultation with home exercise group. At the "12-month follow-up, the manipulative-exercise group showed "more significant reductions in pain intensity (P < 0.001) and in self-rated disability (P = 0.002) than the consultation group." The authors of this 'Spine' published investigation concluded the following: "The manipulative treatment with stabilizing exercises was more effective in reducing pain intensity and disability than the physician consultation alone ."(59)

In 1993 KOES et al. conducted a randomized placebo-controled trail into the efficacy of spinal manipulation as an intervention for the treatment of chronic back and neck pain conditions. The researchers randomized 256 chronic pain patients into a manual therapy group (which consisted of either/or spinal mobilization/manipulation); a physical therapy group; a general medical-care group (which consisted of prescription medication, posture advice, a home exercise sheet); or a placebo group (which consisted of detuned diathermy and ultrasound). At 12 month follow-up, spinal manipulation/mobilization was almost 50% more effective than its closest competitor -physiotherapy - for the treatment of chronic pain and was clearly the most effective form of intervention between physical therapy, medication, home exercise booklet, and placebo. (53)

There are other randomized controlled trials that also demonstrate the efficacy of Chiropractic care as an intervention for chronic pain (62,55,49,57,64,78,79,50,56,51,60,61,45,58,63,52-54,59), but I believe I've made my case with the aforementioned 6 investigations.

### **EVIDENCE BASED TREATMENT GUIDELINES: The Mercy Guidelines.**

The 'Guidelines for Chiropractic Quality Assurance and Practice Parameters" (aka: the Mercy Guidelines), which are the strongest evidence based chiropractic guidelines on the planet, also support the use of spinal manipulation as an intervention for the treatment of chronic spinal pain. More explicitly, the Mercy Guidelines state the following: "repeated use of passive care (chiropractic manipulation/modalities) is generally acceptable in the management of cases undergoing prolonged recovery (i.e., chronic pain)" (75), "Patients with chronic disorders may require more treatment/care to resolve symptomatic episodes than do other categories of complaint." (76), and "Chronic Episode: Supportive care using passive therapy (spinal manipulation/modalities) may be necessary if repeated efforts to withdraw treatment/care result in significant deterioration of clinical status." (77)

MERCY IN SUPPORT OF CHRONIC PAIN: Flare-ups ONLY docs!

Page 125, Chapter 8 of the 'Guidelines for Chiropractic Quality Assurance and Practice

Parameters' (aka: The Mercy Guidelines); Aspen publishers inc. 2005, unlike the ACOEM Guidelines, specifically addresses what type of treatment frequency is reasonably medically necessary to properly address "exacerbation of a chronic condition." More explicitly, Mercy states that following exacerbation of a chronic condition, 3 to 5 treatments per week should bring about "significant improvement" [of the exacerbation] within two weeks. For the next six to eight weeks, if necessary, a treatment frequency of 3 times per week should be sufficient to return the patient to pre-exacerbation level and free the patient from the need of professionally administered spinal manipulation and its associated therapies care. (74) This level of treatment frequency is also supported in a recent randomized controlled trial (67). All such "acute episodes" should be causatively investigated and reported upon by the PTP.

### **TENS UNIT SUPPORT:**

I also recommend that the patient be provided a TENS that may be used to address acute flare-ups of symptomatology. In a randomized double-blind placebo-controlled trial, TENS has been demonstrated to be just as effective for relieving acute pain as prescription medication. More explicitly, in 1987 Ordog randomized 100 patients who were suffering acute pain into either a TENS group, a placebo group, or a prescription medication group (Tylenol with Codeine). The results confirmed that TENS was just as efficacious for treating acute pain as prescription Tylenol with Codeine. The senior author concluded by opining the following: "TENS was approximately as effective as acetaminophen (300-600 mg) with codeine (30-60 mg) but had no side effects. Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulators have been shown to be effective in the management of acute traumatic pain and may be indicated for patients who cannot be given medications." (400) The PTP should instruct the patient on how to use the TENS machine properly and safely.

### **Exercise and Functional Restoration:**

The Exercise and Home Functional Restoration Program that I have recommended are strongly and overwhelmingly supported by the ACOEM guides (124-126), the Mercy Guidelines (127), and numerous, quality, randomized controlled investigations (144-161). I believe Dr. Deyo, MD and Weinstein, DO summed it up best in their landmark publication within the February 2001 publication of the New England Journal of Medicine (145) entitled "Low Back Pain": They stated, "Back exercises are also not helpful in the acute phase (of back pain), although they are useful later for preventing recurrences and for treating chronic low back pain. (144,146-149)" Another, more recent meta-analysis on the efficacy of exercise as an intervention for the treatment of chronic pain was made by Maher – 2004. He concluded, "Exercise is one of the few clearly effective treatments for chronic low back pain. The four most recent systematic reviews of exercise have each concluded that exercise is an effective therapy for chronic low back pain." (171-174) [170]

I do not believe that this part of my recommendations should be challenged, for the

evidence is overwhelmingly supportive of such exercise based programs for the treatment and prevention of chronic pain; furthermore, the use of such exercise is clearly within the scope of Chiropractic (99).

## **APPORTIONMENT RESEARCH:**

## < DJD | DDD | Spondylolysis / Spondylolisthesis >

### **DEGENERATIVE JOINT DISEASE (DJD):**

I believe Professor Nikolai Bogduk, MD, researcher, author, and two-time Volvo Award winner addressed the contention that Degenerative Joint disease (aka: DJD, spondylosis) was predictive of spine pain quite well by stating the following: "Spondylosis, disc degeneration, facet degeneration or osteoarthritis are not legitimate diagnoses of the cause or source of back pain. The correlations with pain are either nil or poor. On plain films, spondylosis equally common in both symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals (507-514) and does not, therefore, constitute a diagnosis of the cause of pain." (500)

For example, in 1976 Torgerson et al. published one of the only prospective investigations into the radiographic findings of 387 symptomatic low back pain patients versus 217 asymptomatic patients (who were x-rayed because of kidney problems). The results demonstrated that spondylosis (aka: degenerative joint disease or DJD) was seen just as often in the symptomatic back pain patients as it was in the asymptomatic (no back pain) patients. More explicitly, 47% of the asymptomatic group had spondylosis, and 57% of the low-back pain patients had spondylosis. (507) This small difference was not statistically significant.

More recently, in 2001 Lee et al. demonstrated that endplate sclerosis (aka: spondylosis) was just a prevalent in symptomatic neck pain patients as it was in asymptomatic volunteers of the same age. They concluded, "Our results suggest that the radiographic density of cervical vertebral end plates (spondylosis/sclerosis) correlates neither with neck pain nor with increasing age." (515)

In conclusion, I find no evidence of prior pre-existing impairment, work restriction, subjective factors of disability, or underlying disease or pathology that could have influenced the cause or degree of permanent impairment/disability described above. Therefore, based upon reasonable medical probability, apportionment is not indicated, and 100% of the permanent disability/impairment is attached to the industrial injury of 04/11/03.

### **DEGENERATIVE DISC DISEASE (DDD):**

Finally, I would like to present the Volvo Award Winning and Young Investigator Award winning work of Dr. Norbert Boos et al. in hopes of shedding more light on

degenerative disc disease's role in 'predicting' the occurrence of future low back pain and disability:

In 1995 3-time Volvo Award winner, Dr. Norbert Boos, published a Volvo Award Winning investigation into the accuracy of MRI for predicting symptomatic disc herniation and disc degeneration (among other things). The set-up for this investigation was most ingenious: For the first time ever, a control group (an asymptotic pain-free group of people) of 46 patients was 'matched' by sex, age, and occupational duties to a group of patients awaiting discectomy for disc herniation-associated back and leg pain. This group of asymptomatic (pain-free) people, all of whom had 'high-risk' occupations for the development of back pain, amazingly, demonstrated an extremely high prevalence of disc herniation (76%) and degenerative disc disease (86%) on MRI despite NEVER having complaints of low back pain before! (601) Therefore, the appearance of degenerative disc disease alone, as demonstrated in this award winning investigation, was NOT associated with pain or disability.

Boos, however, still was not done with the group of asymptomatic, high-risk, people, who all had disc degeneration and/or disc protrusion, and decided to follow them for 5 years to see if that asymptomatic disc degeneration and/or disc herniations eventually turned into a painful and/or disabling situation. The results were published in yet another award winning investigation (the Young Investigator Award 2001) and revealed that despite a worsening of the degenerative disc disease in 41% of the asymptomatic people, only 12% developed a temporary spell of low back pain and, even more amazingly, 0% became hospitalized or permanently disabled as a result of back pain! (602) Therefore, the appearance of degenerative disc disease alone, as demonstrated in this award winning investigation, was NOT associated or predictive of future pain or disability.

### SPONDYLOLYSIS & SPONDYLOLISTHESIS:

It has long been known that spondylolysis/spondylolisthesis are seen just as frequently in asymptomatic people as they are in symptomatic people (501,512). More explicitly, in 1982 Libson and Dinari radiographically studied the occurrence rate (prevalence) of spondylolysis/spondylolisthesis in 936 asymptomatic and 662 symptomatic military soldiers concurrently. Over all, they found no difference between the two groups, i.e., 10% of the asymptomatic soldiers and 9% of the symptomatic soldiers had spondylolysis/spondylolisthesis. (501) This same prevalence percentage for spondylolysis/spondylolisthesis was found in Jensen's investigation into false positives on MRI in the asymptomatic population (512). The latter was the investigation that prompted Professor Nikolai Bogduk, MD, researcher, author, and two-time Volvo Award winner to proclaim within the Australasian Faculty of Musculoskeletal Medicine Guidelines that "finding a pars defect on a plain film does not constitute establishing a diagnosis of the patient's pain." (500)

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