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Chiropractic Research Roundup

When reading reports on new research, it is important to remember that no single study should be seen as providing the whole truth. The following reports offer helpful clues but in most cases further research is needed before firm conclusions can be drawn.

Pregnancy-Related Lumbopelvic Pain Responds to Chiropractic Care

For over a century, chiropractors have reported positive results in treating pregnancy-related lumbopelvic pain (PRLP), but research on the topic has been minimal. Now, in a prospective observational cohort study of consecutive patients with PRLP, data on 115 patients were collected at baseline and on 78 patients (median age 30) at the end of the active treatment lasting . Disability was measured using the Bournemouth Disability Questionnaire (BDQ). Pain intensity was measured using the Numerical Rating Scale for pain (NRS). Patients were also asked to self-rate their improvement. Care was provided by a chiropractic physician/physical therapist team.

Fifty-seven patients (73%) reported their improvement as either “excellent” or “good.” The mean patient-rated improvement was 61.5%. The mean improvement in BDQ was 17.8 points. The mean percentage of improvement in BDQ was 39% and the median was 48%. Mean improvement in pain was 2.9 points. Fifty-one percent of the patients had experienced clinically significant improvement in disability and 67% patients had experienced clinically significant improvement in pain. Patients were seen an average 6.8 visits. Follow-up data for an average of 11 months after the end of treatment were collected on 61 patients. Upon follow-up, 85.5% of patients rated their improvement as either “excellent” or “good.” The mean patient-rated improvement was 83.2%. The mean improvement in BDQ was 28.1 points. The mean percentage of improvement in BDQ was 68% and the median was 87.5%. Mean improvement in pain was 3.5 points. Seventy-three percent of the patients had experienced clinically significant improvement in disability and 82% patients had experienced clinically significant improvement in pain. The researchers note that “the absence of randomization and a control group limits interpretation with regard to clinical effectiveness. Randomized, controlled trials are necessary to distinguish treatment effects from the natural history of PRLP.”

Murphy DR, Hurwitz EL, McGovern EE. Outcome of pregnancy-related lumbopelvic pain treated according to a diagnosis-based decision rule: a prospective observational cohort study. *J Manipulative Physiol Ther.* Oct 2009;32(8):616-624.

Beneficial Long-Term Effects of Chiropractic Care for Infantile Colic

The aim of this study was to document any behavioral or sleep disturbances experienced by post-colicky toddlers who were previously treated with chiropractic care versus those who had not experienced this treatment as an infant. Two groups of children were sampled from clinic records from a chiropractic clinic and from a child care center in similar regions of England. Patients were classified in the treatment group if they had been treated for infant colic with routine low-force chiropractic manual therapy and these were compared against children in the same age group who had received no chiropractic care for their diagnosed colic as infants. A survey of parents of 117 post-colicky toddlers in a treatment group and 111 toddlers in the nontreatment group was performed.

Toddlers who were treated with chiropractic care for colic were twice as likely to not experience long-term sequelae of infant colic, such as temper tantrums and frequent nocturnal waking than those who were not treated with chiropractic care as colicky infants. These findings suggest that chiropractic care for infants with colic may have an effect on long-term sequelae noted at 2-3 years of age.

Miller JE, Phillips HL. Long-term effects of infant colic: a survey comparison of chiropractic treatment and nontreatment groups. *J Manipulative Physiol Ther.* Oct 2009;32(8):635-638.