

[IMAGE]

## Arterial Disease Linked to Back Pain

Atherosclerosis, the buildup of fatty deposits in your arteries, can lead to high blood pressure, chest pain, heart attack or stroke. Evidence suggests that insufficient blood circulation associated with atherosclerosis may contribute to another serious condition: erosion/degeneration of the discs in your spine.

Speaking of spines, a study published in a journal by the same name investigated whether atherosclerotic lesions in the abdominal aorta were more advanced in patients with low back pain (LBP) vs. those without pain. From 1991-1993, 29 patients (21-58 years of age) were evaluated using a diagnostic procedure called CT discography.

Results showed that 55% of LBP patients had atherosclerotic damage visible on CT scan, compared with only 21% of patients without LBP. This difference was further emphasized when examining a specific group of patients (50 years of age or younger): 48% of LBP patients had aortic damage vs. only 8% of patients without low back pain.

Atherosclerosis is so common that many people assume it's a normal consequence of aging, but don't be fooled: overwhelming research suggests that diet and lifestyle can play a major role in preventing this disease. Your chiropractor can provide you with more information on low back pain, atherosclerosis, and how you can avoid both.

### *Reference:*

Kurunlahti M, Tervonen O, Vanharanta H, et al. Association of atherosclerosis with low back pain and the degree of disc degeneration. *Spine*, October 15, 1999: Vol. 24, No. 20, pp2080-84.

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