[IMAGE]

Friends, Family and Chiropractic: The Ideal Health Care Team

People often underestimate the value of having a strong network of friends, family members and associates. In general, previous studies have shown that people who have large, healthy social networks live longer, are less likely to contract certain diseases, and are more likely to survive a serious condition such as cancer or a heart attack. A new study published in The Lancet Neurology shows that having a strong social network may also pay off by protecting against the onset of Alzheimer’s disease.

In the study, researchers conducted brain autopsies of 89 people without known dementia who had been participating in an annual memory and aging project in Illinois. Each year, the participants underwent a series of clinical exams and cognitive performance tests. In addition, the researchers asked about the number of children, close friends and relatives they had, and how many of those people the participant saw at least once per month. The people in this group constituted the participants’ social network.

The researchers determined that a large social network helped to protect against the effects of the fibrous "tangles" and amyloid plaque formations associated with Alzheimer’s disease. For people with small amounts of plaque and tangles, the size of a person’s social network had little effect on their cognitive abilities. However, as the number of tangles and plaques increased, cognitive function and memory skills remained higher for people who had larger social networks.

The importance of having a good group of family and friends to support you cannot be overlooked ñ much as the importance of having a health care provider who is concerned about your overall health and well-being cannot be overestimated. To enjoy the patient-focused benefits of chiropractic care, make an appointment with your local doctor of chiropractic today.

Reference:

Bennett DA, Schneider JA, Tang Y, et al. The effect of social networks on the relation between Alzheimer’s disease pathology and level of cognitive function in old people: a longitudinal cohort study. *The Lancet Neurology*, May 2006;5(5)406-412.

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