

[IMAGE]

Catching on to Chiropractic

Chiropractic is the principal and most-regulated form of complementary and alternative health care. There are about 60,000 chiropractors - a number expected to nearly double by 2010. The percentage of Americans who use chiropractic increased from approximately 3.6% in 1980 to 11% in 1997. The profession may be so successful because it exhibits characteristics of both alternative and mainstream health care.

A recent review of chiropractic in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* highlighted the necessity of research in furthering the profession, and noted that dozens of well-designed studies on spinal manipulation have shown favorable results of chiropractic care. One of the main reasons chiropractic has done so well is because of studies showing its success. The review presented some very positive figures, which are presented below:

- Forty-three clinical studies on the effectiveness of spinal manipulation at treating low back pain have been published; 30 of these showed manipulation to be favorable to other treatments, 13 found no major effects, and none showed manipulation to be less effective than the comparison treatment.
- Eleven of the back pain studies included a group receiving placebo (or sham) treatment; of these, eight indicated an advantage of chiropractic manipulation over placebo.
- Seven of nine studies on the effectiveness of manipulation for treating headache showed positive results.
- Serious complications from chiropractic adjustments are rare: only about one per 100 million lumbar adjustments, and one per 400,000-10 million neck manipulations.

As a chiropractic patient, you have probably known for a long time how effective this form of treatment is at resolving multiple health problems. With more research reaffirming chiropractic's effectiveness, perhaps others will start to catch on as well.

Reference:

Meeker WC, Haldeman S. Chiropractic: A profession at the crossroads of mainstream and alternative medicine. *Annals of Internal Medicine* 2002;136(3), pp. 216-227.

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