

[IMAGE]

A Failure to Communicate

Patients who exaggerate their pain or set unreasonable expectations of their chiropractors are known to be at a higher risk for long-term disability. For the most effective treatment from your doctor of chiropractic, he or she must have a clear knowledge of your symptoms and concerns.

A recent survey of 30 chiropractors and 336 patients in Sweden showed that both groups had many similar goals and expectations for treatment. For example, both doctors and patients expected the practitioner to identify and explain a problem, and both expected treatment to reduce symptoms and make patients feel better overall.

There were several differences in treatment expectations, however. Patients had significantly lower expectations of treatment success than their doctors, yet higher expectations for advice and exercise. Patients also disagreed with their doctors of chiropractic on how many treatments were necessary. Out of options ranging from 1-2, 3-5, 6-10, or more than 10 treatments (or no opinion), most chiropractors felt that 3-5 treatments are necessary for "substantial" improvement. Patients expected improvement after 1-2 treatments, or had no opinion on what to expect.

Poor communication between the patient and doctor can negatively affect treatment outcomes. With any health practitioner you seek, be sure to understand one another and have similar treatment expectations for the best results possible.

Reference: Sigrell H. Expectations of chiropractic treatment: What are the expectations of new patients consulting a chiropractor, and do chiropractors and patients have similar expectations? *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics* 2002;25(5), pp. 300-305.

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