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University of Chicago Medical Center study links chiropractic care with reduction of blood pressure.

Lowering Blood Pressure an Easy Adjustment

August 1 - 2007, Orleans. Researchers at the Hypertension Center at the University of Chicago Medical Center are reporting stunning reductions in the blood pressure of patients afflicted with hypertension following simple and painless chiropractic care.

In the study – published in the March 2, 2007 issue of *The Journal of Human Hypertension* and featured on *WebMD* – 50 patients with hypertension were divided into two groups of 25 each. One group of 25 received a specific light force chiropractic adjustment (administered by a chiropractor) to the atlas vertebra (uppermost bone in the neck). This vertebra holds up the head and only relies on soft tissue to maintain alignment. Misalignment, also known as subluxation, usually goes undiagnosed and causes no pain or discomfort. The other group of 25 received a similar procedure but with no adjustment being given. Researchers called this procedure the "sham adjustment." Since the type of adjustment given was very light force, the patients involved in this study did not know if they were receiving the real or sham adjustments.

After 8 weeks of care, the 25 people in the group receiving the real chiropractic adjustments all showed a significant reduction in blood pressure compared to the group that received the sham adjustment. Those patients who got the real adjustment showed an average of 14 mm Hg greater drop in systolic blood pressure (the top number in a blood pressure count), and an average of 8 mm Hg greater drop in diastolic blood pressure (the bottom blood pressure number) over those who got the fake or sham adjustment.

"As noted by the chiropractor who performed on the study team, at the base of the brain are two centers that control all the muscles of the body. If you pinch the base of the brain – if the atlas gets locked in a position as little as a half a millimeter out of line – it doesn't cause any pain but it upsets these centers," said Dr. Nathalie Beauchamp, a chiropractor whose family wellness practice is located in Orleans.

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X-rays confirmed that the chiropractic adjustments actually changed the position of the atlas vertebra among those in the study group.

“The study leader reported that the procedure had the effect of not one, but two blood pressure medications given in combination. And, his team reported no side effects whatsoever from the adjustment,” added Dr. Beauchamp.

“Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is widespread among adults in the United States. And, if uncontrolled, it can lead to heart and kidney failure or a stroke. According to the American Heart Association, nearly one in three adults suffers from hypertension. However, many are unaware that they are afflicted – making high blood pressure the ‘silent killer.’ This study offers so much hope,” noted Dr. Beauchamp.

Even with the overwhelming results, the authors of the study posed several questions of their own in the *WebMD* interview. They wanted to know why blood pressure was reduced. What caused the reduction? What is the relationship between the misaligned atlas vertebra and hypertension?

“Chiropractic care is a maintenance program for the nervous system. If the nervous system is free of stress and operating at peak efficiency, it can lead the body to do incredible things. This study begs for further research. While man struggles to create new and better technologies on a daily basis, we continue to find that the human body is the greatest technology on today’s market – let’s take good care of it,” concluded a smiling Dr. Beauchamp.