

93% of Whiplash Patients Improve With Chiropractic

This article's introduction sums up the state of whiplash treatment very well:

"The 'whiplash' syndrome is a collection of symptoms produced as a result of soft-tissue injury of the cervical spine. The accumulated literature suggests that 43 percent of patients will suffer long-term symptoms following 'whiplash' injury. If patients are still symptomatic after three months then there is almost a 90 per cent chance that they will remain so. No conventional treatment has proven to be effective in these established chronic cases." (Except Chiropractic)

The authors of this study examined the effectiveness of chiropractic in 28 patients with **chronic** whiplash pain. The patients were referred to the chiropractic physician an average of 15.5 (range, 3-44) months after the accident, and were interviewed before treatment by both an independent chiropractic and orthopedic physician. The patients were assigned to one of four classification groups: A - No symptoms; B - Symptoms are a nuisance; C - Symptoms are intrusive; and, D - Symptoms are disabling. The initial evaluation placed 27 of the 28 patients in groups C or D.

"Following treatment, 26 (93 per cent) of the patients had improved: 16 by one symptom group and 10 by two symptom groups. This improvement was independent of whether it was assessed by an orthopaedic surgeon or a chiropractor. In the group that had improved, 17 had stopped their treatment at the time of assessment; symptoms had recurred to a minor degree in four (24 per cent) of these patients and they were considering further treatment."

The authors conclude that these are exciting findings, and that they merit further investigations with randomized, controlled studies.

Woodward MN, Cook JCH, Gargan MF, Bannister GC. Chiropractic treatment of chronic 'whiplash' injuries. Injury: International Journal of the Care of the Injured 1996;27(9):643-645.