Understanding Chiropractic Care for Fibromyalgia

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Chiropractic Care for Fibromyalgia: Does It Work?

Many fibromyalgia patients seek natural treatment for fibromyalgia, and chiropractic care is one of the most frequently considered, especially for pain management and to improve the range of motion of joints.

This form of medicine is based on the principle that the body has the ability to self-heal and recover from a disease. The nervous system runs between the spine and carries messages from the brain to every cell of the body.

When the vertebrae are restricted, locked or misaligned there will be pressure on the nerves and symptoms will occur. For this reason, a chiropractor will perform “adjustments” using gentle pressure, stretching or certain high velocity thrusts to bring the vertebrae to optimal position and restore health.

Research Studies on Chiropractic Care for Fibromyalgia

A study conducted in a chiropractic clinic in Canada revealed that 30 chiropractic treatments can improve pain by up to 77 percent, the quality of sleep by 63 percent and decrease fatigue by almost 75 percent. Positive findings had been recorded in a small, preliminary study (also performed in Canada) with documented improvements in joint mobility pain intensity while using various chiropractic techniques such as spinal manipulation, stretching and soft tissue therapy.

A review of several research studies, including eight systematic reviews and three meta-analyses that assessed the benefits of alternative medicine for fibromyalgia was published in 2009 in the *Journal of Manipulative Physiology and Therapeutics*. According to this systematic review, there is some evidence that spinal manipulation, diet and vitamins can help manage fibromyalgia, although more scientific evidence supported the use of exercise, psychotherapy massage, acupuncture and spa therapy (hydro therapy) for this condition.

Special Considerations

Some people may fear fibromyalgia chiropractic adjustments may trigger the pain. Overall, this form of therapy has a good safety profile and patients receiving adjustments are satisfied with the results.

In some cases, adjustments may cause aggravation of the symptoms (including pain) for a brief period of time.

If you experience pain or any other symptoms after chiropractic adjustments, talk to the doctor to possibly change the therapy (these adjustments can be performed in several ways, some being gentler than others). Also look at the results.

If you don’t achieve symptom improvement following the recommended set of treatments, you may need to change or add other modalities (some chiropractors are also trained in acupuncture, naturopathy or homeopathy).

You should not seek spinal manipulation if you suffer from osteoporosis, spinal cord compression, inflammatory arthritis (i.e. lupus, rheumatoid arthritis). If you have cancer, you should also talk to your MD first before using chiropractic care.

Otherwise, if you are looking to better control fibromyalgia symptoms, it’s worth considering this form of therapy. In addition, try to improve your lifestyle; eat a healthy, balanced diet, exercise regularly and practice stress management techniques.