

Understanding the Power of Chiropractic

Written by John Minardi, B.H.K., D.C.

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Chiropractors claim to have a direct influence on a person's nervous system through the chiropractic adjustment. We further claim that people who remain subluxated (having a misalignment in the spine which causes a distortion in the communication of the nervous system) will have some form of neurological dysfunction. However, most people are not aware of the global health changes that can occur under chiropractic care, nor do they understand the complex neurological changes that occur with adjustments. Many people who have been to a chiropractor understand chiropractic from the classic "nerve pressure" theory. In a nutshell, the theory implies that a bone, or some other structure, moves from its normal position and places pressure on a neighboring nerve. The pressure leads to the nerve not functioning properly, which can result in a host of problems. People under chiropractic care visualize this explanation and can easily understand it. However, if this is the only explanation we give them, they will understand only a very small piece of the power of the chiropractic adjustment.

We know that chiropractic adjustments in the upper cervical spine (upper neck) significantly decrease an individual's hypertension. There is no peripheral nerve connection from the neck to the structure that controls blood pressure, so the nerve pressure theory cannot be the explanation, yet these changes still occur. I contend that the nerve pressure theory is a very small piece of what is taking place inside the body. In my opinion, the most powerful connection between a chiropractic adjustment and a person's global health changes is the direct effect the adjustment has on the brain and central nervous system.

So how does a spinal subluxation affect the brain and nervous system? The subluxation acts as both a physical stressor, due to the strain of the supporting structures connecting to that vertebra, and a chemical stressor, due to the accumulation of inflammation inside the joints. These physical and chemical stressors flood the brain with negative information from the body. The negative stress information is the neurological connection between the subluxation and the limbic system, which launches the stress response. The stress response activates two systems: The sympatho-adrenal system (SAS), and the hypothalamic pituitary adrenal axis (HPA). The SAS activates the sympathetic nervous system, which in turn releases hormones into the circulation. Once these hormones reach the adrenal glands, the adrenal glands release adrenaline into the bloodstream. Adrenaline supplies energy to the muscles and heart to prepare for the stress; however, it takes this energy from reproductive organs and the gastrointestinal tract.

The HPA axis activates the area of the brain which releases additional hormones into circulation. Once these hormones reach the adrenal glands, the adrenals release cortisol. Cortisol supplies energy to the muscles, but it takes this energy from reproductive organs and the immune system. This stress response is a normal response, provided the stressor is removed within a short period. However, when the stressor is not removed quickly, this chronic release of stress hormones negatively alters the immune, reproductive, and gastrointestinal

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systems, triggering a cascade of disease and illness. By removing the stressor (the subluxation) via chiropractic adjustment, we help stop the chronic stress response and allow energy to be reallocated to the centers that promote growth, expansion, and health.

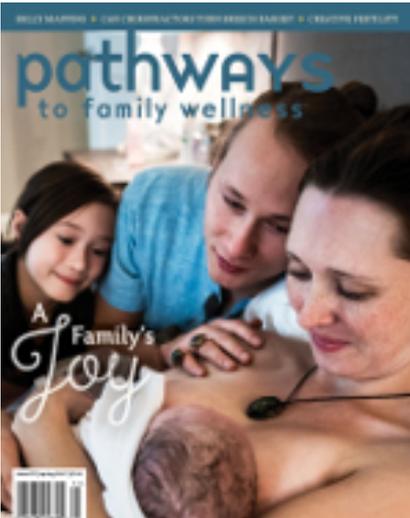
In a nutshell, each time a chiropractor adjusts someone's spine, we replace the negative information that is flooding the brain with positive information. This recalibrates the brain to help stop the release of chronic stress hormones and allows overall health and healing to occur. Every time a person receives a chiropractic adjustment, it positively affects the brain and nervous system. This positive effect on the brain promotes a state of ease and well-being within the body.

Even this is a small piece of the puzzle, but it gives us better insight on how chiropractic adjustments have a profound neurological effect on the central nervous system. Understanding this neurological effect can help us better identify how an adjustment changes the body's stress response patterns and restores a state of ease. This knowledge enhances our understanding of how a woman can become pregnant under chiropractic care when she was unable to do so in the past. It opens up an important dialogue about how pregnant women under regular chiropractic care may experience greater resilience to modern stressors and have easier pregnancies and births. It may also shed some light on how breastfeeding and digestion in infants improve under chiropractic care. As chiropractors, we do not claim to have a cure for infertility, colic, or any other ailment. What we do is assess and adjust spinal subluxations to help the brain and body adapt and heal. The adaptation and healing process is as unique to each person as their own brains are!

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