

## Spinal Manipulation May Benefit Asthma Patients

Editorial Staff

DES MOINES, Iowa - Patients afflicted with asthma may benefit from spinal manipulation, an audience was told on October 5 at the 9th International Conference on Spinal Manipulation in Toronto. The conference was sponsored by the Foundation for Chiropractic Education and Research (FCER).

An investigative team headed by Ray Hayek, PhD, has been conducting a trial at 16 treatment centers in Australia in an effort to ascertain what effects spinal manipulation has on symptoms, depression and anxiety, general health status, and the levels of immunity as reflected by the concentrations of an immunoglobulin (IgA) and an immunosuppressant (cortisol). This investigation, involving 420 patients (average age of 46), draws from several references in the scientific literature that suggest that different forms of manual therapy (including massage) improve the symptomatology and lower cortisol levels in asthma patients.

Dr. Hayek reported that only the patient group that underwent spinal manipulation (by any of four commonly used manipulative treatment protocols) displayed significant improvement in asthma symptoms and depression and anxiety scores. Simply experiencing structured interviews at the treatment centers or being monitored at home did not yield these improvements. Patients undergoing spinal manipulation displayed dramatic increases of IgA and decreases of cortisol through the posttreatment period. The researchers noted that the patients undergoing spinal manipulative treatments had increased immunological capacities, which would be expected to ward off subsequent asthmatic attacks.

The researchers believe that these biochemical changes suggest that the effects of spinal manipulation are more far-reaching and more long-term than commonly believed. The gain in immunological capacity achieved with the simultaneous loss of the immunosuppressant cortisol and the increase of the immunoglobulin IgA following spinal manipulation would be expected to reduce the incidence and severity of pathogenic invasion of the airways. There would be less of a risk under these circumstances of compounding the symptoms of asthma.

The immunosuppressing mechanism of glucocorticoids is believed to occur by reducing the permeability of capillaries, decreasing the migration of white blood cells in inflamed areas, suppressing the release of interleukins, and inhibiting the production of proteolytic enzymes by stabilizing the lysosomal membranes which release them.

This study followed contacts that the director of research at the FCER was able to make with the Australian research community in 1995, taking into consideration the expertise of the investigative team and the fact that Australia's two million asthma sufferers have given the island continent the dubious distinction of being the asthma capital of the world. It has been carried out with the support of research grants exceeding a quarter of a million dollars from the FCER and the National Chiropractic Mutual Insurance Company.

The FCER believes this research may be highly influential for chiropractic's future, and continues

to seek funding. To contribute to this important project, please call FCER at 800-637-6244, or donate on the FCER's website ([www.fcer.org/html/asthmaupd1002.htm](http://www.fcer.org/html/asthmaupd1002.htm)).

This research represents one of approximately 50 projects administered by FCER since 1990 to document the theory and practice of chiropractic, and to increase chiropractic's integration into health care worldwide.

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