

Pediatric Care in Canada

Dynamic Chiropractic Staff

For all the wealth of chiropractic data that has been accumulated in recent years, there is a limited amount of information on chiropractic treatment of the pediatric population (patients under the age of 18). The findings of a yet unpublished Canadian study shed some light on this barren landscape.

The study, conducted by Marja Verhoef and Claire Durant of the University of Calgary in Alberta, and Costa Papadopoulos of the Canadian Chiropractic Association, was a cross-sectional survey mailed to a random sample of 1,200 Canadian chiropractors. The chiropractors were also asked to keep a diary for one month to track their pediatric patients and treatments.

Fifty-eight percent of the chiropractors who received the survey completed the questionnaire, and 45 percent of the diaries were returned. Although analysis of the data is incomplete, preliminary results have provided some indications.

Age is a Factor

Some of the DCs indicated they did not treat certain age groups in the pediatric population:

- 16 percent did not treat patients under the age of two;
- 10 percent did not treat patients in the 2-4 age range;
- four percent did not treat the 5-10 age group; and
- two percent did not treat the 11-17 group.

As one would expect, the number of pediatric patients treated progressively increased in the older age groups. On average, six patients were seen in the two and under group; eight patients in the 2-4 age group; 11 patients in the 5-10; and 17 patients in the 11-18 range.

Dear Diary

The preliminary analysis of the diary cards shows that the chiropractors generally tended to underestimate the number of children they treated. This situation was most pronounced for the patients in the five and under age group. Further analysis of the diaries will be conducted.

What They're Treating

To some degree, nearly all the chiropractors were involved in treating pediatric patients. While 82 percent of chiropractors asserted they provided prevention or maintenance care to their young patients, not surprisingly, the most common treatments were for musculoskeletal and

articular/joint conditions. However, substantial numbers of chiropractors treated other conditions: headaches (40 percent), otitis media (19 percent), and asthma (11 percent).

Forty-six percent of the chiropractors indicated that they'd received formal postgraduate training (college and association seminars or courses) in pediatrics, and seventy-two percent had received some form of informal training (conferences, reading, videotape instruction and personal consultations).

Chiropractors who had received pediatric training, formal or otherwise, were more likely to have among their pediatric patient base youngsters five years old and under. Eighty-six percent of the chiropractors indicated that they were interested in more pediatric training.

SEPTEMBER 1998