

Chiropractic for Kids: Getting the Word Out

ICPA STUDY ON SAFETY/EFFECTIVENESS OF PEDIATRIC CHIROPRACTIC PUBLISHED.

Editorial Staff

"The Safety and Effectiveness of Pediatric Chiropractic: A Survey of Chiropractors and Parents in a Practice-Based Research Network," has been published in *Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing*. The study, phase one of a project undertaken by the [International Chiropractic Pediatric Association](#) (ICPA) as part of its practice-based research network (PBRN), assessed pediatric chiropractic by surveying chiropractors and parents of pediatric patients (18 years of age and younger), revealing high overall satisfaction and near-nonexistent complications and adverse events.

Survey of chiropractors: Data was derived from 577 pediatric clinical cases, with patients ranging in age from less than 1 day to 18 years (average age: 7.45 years). All patients received spinal manipulative therapy at each visit (5,438 total office visits).

According to the study, "wellness care" was the primary reason indicated for care [46 percent of patients, 25 percent of whom reported a specific complaint during their presentation (e.g., colic)]. For condition-based presentations, musculoskeletal conditions were the most common presentations seen (26 percent of patients), and diversified, Gonstead, Thompson and Activator with the most common techniques utilized. Other reasons for care included digestion/elimination problems (7 percent), ear, nose and throat problems (6 percent), neurological problems (6 percent), immune dysfunction (5 percent) and other (4 percent).

In terms of safety, no treatment-associated complications were indicated by chiropractic or parent responders, and chiropractors indicated only three adverse events in 5,438 office visits involving treatment of 577 children: "muscle stiffness," "spine soreness" and "stiff and sore." The treating chiropractor's response to such treatment-related aggravations was to re-examine the child and apply a different technique, modification of the manipulative technique originally used, or modification of the spinal segment to which the manipulation was applied.

Survey of parents/guardians: Data was derived from 239 children representing a similar number of children (average age: 6.16 years) who made 1,735 total visits to chiropractic offices. In this survey, 47 percent of parents/guardians reported bringing their children in for "wellness care" and musculoskeletal complaints were again the most common condition-based presentation.

Parents indicated two adverse events following chiropractic care: soreness of the child's knee following care to address a knee complaint, and cervical spine stiffness following SMT to address the child's cervical spine dysfunction.

With regard to effectiveness, both chiropractors and parents indicated high rates of improvement following chiropractic care for the children's presenting complaints, as well as "salutary effects unrelated to the children's initial clinical presentation." The most common treatment-associated improvements noted were decreased pain, improved mood and increased immune function. Improvements unrelated to the patients' initial presentation included immune-system

improvements, improved sleep and improved emotional state/mood.

In their conclusion, the authors note: "To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study of its kind addressing the safety and effectiveness of pediatric chiropractic SMT in a practice-based research setting. The results of both our practitioner and patient surveys demonstrate a highly perceived effectiveness for pediatric chiropractic care as well as a high level of safety. We advocate continued research in this area with larger prospective cohorts incorporating the co-variables of safety and effectiveness of pediatric SMT."

To find out more about this study and the ICPA Children's PBRN, including plans for phase two, visit www.icpa4kids.com. To order a full-text copy of this study, visit the *Explore* online site: www.explorejournal.com.

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