

Improving Health-Related Quality of Life: Better With Chiropractic

Editorial Staff | DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

A recently published follow-up study shows the positive impact of chiropractic care "on all aspects of HRQOL (Health-Related Quality of Life)" measured in the study.¹ The original investigation, published in 2018, suggested chiropractic combined with "usual medical care" (UMC) was more effective than medical care alone for low back pain and disability.²⁻³ Findings from the follow-up study go a step further, suggesting combination care significantly improves various HRQOL in addition to LBP.

With an active treatment period of six weeks, the study measured quality-of-life improvements in U.S. service members stationed at three military bases across the U.S. This clinical trial did not dictate the care to be provided by either the medical or chiropractic doctors; each patient's care was determined by the patient and their clinician.

Usual medical care (UMC) included prescribed pain medication, physical therapy referral and referrals to a pain clinic. Chiropractic care included spinal manipulation for all 350 participants, strength and flexibility exercises, electrical muscle stimulation, hot / cold packs, functional exercises, mechanical traction, and other manual therapies.

Patients in the usual medical care plus chiropractic care (UMC+CC) group received up to 12 chiropractic visits during the six weeks of care in addition to UMC, with an average of 3.5 visits. The self-reported results, six weeks after care was completed, spoke for themselves (see table).

| Quality-of-Life measure | UMC | | UMC+CC | |
|-------------------------------|---------|----------|---------|----------|
| | % Worse | % Better | % Worse | % Better |
| Physical Health Summary Score | 11% | 39% | 6% | 44% |
| Physical Function | 9% | 37% | 5% | 40% |
| Mental Health Summary Score | 20% | 40% | 11% | 59% |
| Fatigue | 17% | 26% | 10% | 38% |
| Sleep Disturbance | 5% | 16% | 5% | 24% |
| Depression | 17% | 12% | 11% | 21% |

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|------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Emotional Distress Composite | 11% | 18% | 10% | 29% |
| Anxiety | 8% | 17% | 7% | 26% |
| Pain Interference | 14% | 42% | 5% | 58% |
| Social/Role | 23% | 35% | 15% | 48% |
| Pain composite | 10% | 35% | 2% | 56% |
| Pain Intensity | 6% | 26% | 2% | 46% |
| Worst Pain | 4% | 28% | 1% | 42% |

In all measures, a higher percentage of U.S. service members were better off receiving chiropractic care. These findings are the latest in a growing body of research supporting what DCs have always known: chiropractic impacts quality of life for the whole person.

References

1. Hays RD, et al. Health-related quality of life among United States service members with low back pain receiving usual care plus chiropractic care plus usual care vs usual care alone: secondary outcomes of a pragmatic clinical trial. *Pain Med*, 2022 Jan 21; open access ([click here](#) to read the full paper).
2. Goertz CM, et al. Effect of usual medical care plus chiropractic care vs usual medical care alone on pain and disability among US service members with low back pain: a comparative effectiveness clinical trial. *JAMA Netw Open*, 2018;1(1):e180105.
3. DC Staff. "Better With Chiropractic: Biggest RCT in Chiropractic Research in United States Yields Big Findings." *Dynamic Chiropractic*, July 2018.

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