

Research Update

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Several studies funded by FCER are bearing fruit for the chiropractic profession. The first of these is a study by principal investigator, Ian Coulter, PhD, that was published recently in *Topics in Clinical Chiropractic*. (Editor's note: see "New Study is Promising for Chiropractic Geriatrics," 9-1-96, DC.) The study found that elderly chiropractic patients report better overall health, have fewer chronic conditions, spend less time in nursing homes and hospitals, use less prescription drugs, and are more mobile than those elderly people who do not use chiropractic. A startling 87 percent of chiropractic patients described their health status as good to excellent, compared to just 67.8 percent of non-chiropractic patients. The implications of this study for containing the future costs of health care for the elderly are profound indeed.

A study funded by the National Chiropractic Mutual Insurance Company (NCMIC) through FCER is also making a big splash. Researchers at the University of Colorado Health Science Center in Denver, have released the preliminary results of a randomized clinical trial which supports the effectiveness of chiropractic cervical adjustments for neck pain over the effectiveness of 500 mg of acetaminophen (Tylenol) four times daily. Following six weeks of treatments, patients who received chiropractic cervical adjustments for chronic neck pain reported significant improvement in neck pain and function when compared to patients taking acetaminophen. The chiropractic patients also had better range of motion and strength than did the non-chiropractic patients. Continued follow-up will determine if these results are long-lasting.

We've all known for a long time that most low back surgery is not successful. To paraphrase Gordon Waddell, MD, an internationally recognized authority on back pain, no other operation in any field of surgery leaves in its wake more human wreckage than surgery on the lumbar discs. Fortunately, there are other options. The chiropractic alternative to low back surgery is discussed in FCER's new monograph on the subject, which was made possible by a grant from NCMIC.

A new monograph, "Chiropractic for Low Back Pain: An Alternative to Surgery," authored by Deborah Callahan and Dr. Arnold Cianciulli, points out that the scientific literature indicates that the majority of spine surgery procedures have not undergone the rigors of randomized controlled trials. The high rate of failed surgeries (possibly as high as 70 percent) is discussed, as is the high degree of variability in surgical procedures. Chiropractic is singled out as a legitimate, noninvasive, and conservative alternative to surgical treatment of low back pain. All of the claims for chiropractic's efficacy are documented by numerous studies cited in the scientific literature. Readers may purchase a copy of this monograph by calling FCER at (800) 622-6309.

"Who is the New Millennium Chiropractor?" is the title of a study by renowned trends analyst Gerald Celente. According to Celente's Trends Research Institute, conditions in health care delivery will continue to mirror the socio-economic conditions of the nation, which will decline or remain stagnant for some 80 percent of Americans. Managed care will also continue to grow into the 21st century.

Celente and his colleagues have however identified two distinct emerging trends which would be very beneficial to chiropractic. Furthermore, Celente says that "These two trends are not being optimized by other professionals." Stay tuned for the Trends Research Institute's final report this Fall.

"The New Millennium Chiropractor" and another study by the Institute for Alternative Futures, both funded through FCER by NCMIC, are intended to help guide the chiropractic profession through these very turbulent and uncertain times. I will keep readers apprised of their findings in future FCER Forum columns.

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