

Survey: Chiropractic outperforms other back-pain treatments, including medication

August 9, 2011 — In a new survey, chiropractic outperformed all other back-pain treatments including prescription and over-the-counter medications, deep-tissue massage, yoga, and Pilates.

According to the American Chiropractic Association (ACA), this news reinforces the use of conservative care options as a first line of defense against pain.

The survey, released by a leading consumer product rating and survey publisher in late July, found that 65 percent of those surveyed using chiropractic care for back pain said it helped a lot. Only 53 percent of respondents using prescription medications found them as helpful.

Additionally, about half of those surveyed who are using deep-tissue massage, yoga, or Pilates said those treatments helped a lot, and only 28 percent of respondents using over-the-counter medications reported that they helped a lot.

Current evidence-based guidelines support the use of conservative care such as chiropractic for conditions such as chronic lower-back pain. In 2007, the *Annals of Internal Medicine* published low-back pain guidelines developed by the American Pain Society and the American College of Physicians. Those guidelines recommended that, for patients who do not improve with self-care, doctors should consider non-pharmacologic therapies such as chiropractic, massage therapy, and acupuncture.

The issue of pain relief has gained visibility recently with the release of a government report that found that while the use of some illegal drugs has diminished, the abuse of prescription medications has sharply increased — particularly prescription opioid pain relievers such as Oxycontin and Vicodin. The report points out that unintentional opioid overdoses (once almost exclusively the fate of heroin abusers) are today increasingly caused by prescription painkiller abuse.

“As this latest survey helps to demonstrate, chiropractic care is an evidence-based and effective treatment that can prevent patients from resorting to powerful drugs with potentially harmful consequences,” said ACA President Dr. Rick McMichael. “I urge health care providers, whenever possible, to recommend drug-free, conservative care interventions for their patients before prescribing medications that may be associated with negative side effects. Patients deserve to know their options.”

Source: American Chiropractic Association, www.acatoday.org