



MEDIA STATEMENT

The UK's huge cost of “ignoring” the health benefits of chiropractic care

The United Chiropractic Association (UCA) has hit out at the “blinkered” governmental attitudes towards chiropractic care, which means research showing it drastically reduces hospitalisation rates and nursing home admissions has been ignored for almost two decades.

With coronary heart disease (CHD) the biggest killer in the UK and dietary advice on prevention recently discredited, the UCA says the government should look at all possible ways to tackle heart disease and other conditions that affect people as they grow older.

The UCA, which has around 500 members across the UK with tens of thousands of clients, points to research carried out in the US by the [RAND Corporation](#) in 1996. The study looked at 414 people over the age of 75, some 23 (just under 6%) of whom reported receiving chiropractic care. The analysis of the 414 – taken randomly from an insurance database – found some startling but consistent results.

Those receiving chiropractic care were less likely to be using a nursing home (95.7% free of nursing care v 80.8%); more free from hospitalisations for the previous 23 years (73.9% v 52.4%) and more likely to be mobile in the community (69.6% v 46.8%). They were also less likely to use costly prescription drugs.

The report concluded: “Although it is impossible to clearly establish causality, it is clear that continuing chiropractic care is among the attributes of the cohort of patients experiencing substantially fewer costly healthcare interventions.”

And it recommended: “Results suggest a need to develop chiropractic models that address the special preventive and rehabilitative needs of the older patient.”

There have been similar findings in studies in other countries, including Canada and New Zealand.

With an increasing older population the UCA says it's time the government took off its blinkers. “Successive governments have been very selective in the research they listen to and act on,” said UCA executive member Estelle Zauner-Maughan.



“If you keep on doing the same things you can’t expect the results to change. We know the huge cost of hospitalisation, nursing care and prescription drugs, quite apart from the impact of illnesses on people’s lives. And we know from a number of studies around the world that chiropractic care reduces the need for all of those things.

“One study in an area of Canada actually recommended that everyone had access to chiropractic care.” (1993 Manga Report, Ontario, Canada).

CHD is responsible for around 73,000 deaths in the UK each year. About 1 in 6 men and 1 in 10 women die from CHD. In the UK, there are an estimated 2.3 million people living with the condition.

For decades, UK families were advised to cut the risk of heart disease by reducing intake of fatty foods such as dairy produce and some meats. The research which led to that guidance was recently attacked as “flawed” and we are now being told there is no link between these foods and heart disease. Scientists are now telling people to avoid the low fat foods which were previously said to be healthier – because they are actually packed with sugar. In the meantime, obesity rates – linked to heart disease – have shot up in the UK.

Ms Zauner-Maughan explained that chiropractic care helps by keeping the central nervous system in good order so that the brain can ‘talk to’ the rest of the body: “People under regular chiropractic care don’t have to work so hard to stand upright. They have greater balance and mobility. This means they remain active for longer which has many health benefits, including maintaining a healthy heart and a healthy weight.”

She added: “Governments have been quite happy to give the go ahead to advice which is actually bad for people and is based on flawed research. The problem is that the sort of long-term, clinical research that the government requires is very costly and only the large pharmaceutical companies can afford it.

“But that’s no excuse for wearing blinkers and ignoring the studies that have been carried out.”