

Chiropractic and Standard Medical Care for Military Patients with Acute Low Back Pain

Low back pain in both civilian and military populations is costly to treat, results in substantial loss of productivity, and negatively impacts quality of life. In this study, Chiropractic care was added to the Standard Medical Care model for patients suffering from low back pain and seeking care within a United States military healthcare system. This study sought to ascertain whether back pain and physical functioning improved for patients receiving both types of care compared with patients receiving only standard medical care.

The study was conducted between February 2008 and June 2009. Ninety-one active-duty military personnel with low back pain ranging in age from 18 to 35 were enrolled into 2 groups. Each study participant was randomly assigned to a treatment group (Standard Medical Care, or Standard Medical Care + Chiropractic Care). Participants receiving chiropractic care attended between 2 and 8 visits with a median of 7. Authors measured changes in back pain and physical functioning. After 4 weeks,

- Both groups showed improvement in pain and physical function following the 4 week study period. However, in those receiving both standard medical and chiropractic care:
 - Both back pain and physical function significantly improved compared with the group receiving only standard medical
 - Most (73%) participants rated global improvement as pain completely gone, much, or moderately better. Only 17% reported this improvement in the standard medical care group

TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

Adding chiropractic to standard medical care resulted in significant improvement over the current standard care model for treating acute low back pain in active-duty men and women. This evidence supports the idea that collaborative treatment including chiropractic care can result in improved health outcomes.

REFERENCE

Goertz CM, Long CR, Hondras MA, Petri R, Delgado R, Lawrence DJ, Owens EF, Meeker WC. **Adding chiropractic manipulative therapy to standard medical care for patients with acute low back pain: results of a pragmatic randomized comparative effectiveness study.** Spine 2013 Apr 15:38(8)627-34.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23060056>

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