

HEART DISEASE



Over the years, numerous patients that have consulted us have reported heart problems such as arrhythmias, chest pains (angina) and past heart attacks. Almost invariably, it has been our experience that patients with heart complaints have a significant twist in their upper back, in the area where the nerves come out of the spine to go to the heart. In a majority of cases, these patients report an improvement in their condition after adjustments.

Now, a recent study with 275 patients with angina, published in the *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*, showed promising results in the treatment of angina pectoris by chiropractors. Approximately 75% of patients reported improvements in chest pain and general health after receiving adjustments. The remaining reported no change, and no patients reported feeling worse at the end of treatment. Of great interest also is the fact that quality-of-life questionnaires, filled out by the chiropractic patients in the study, revealed statistically significant improvements in mental health, vitality, and emotional and physical measurements.

Although this was the first study we know of which assessed the effects of chiropractic on chest pain, many other previous studies have documented the effects of chiropractic on heart function. As early as 1949, research performed at the BJ Palmer Chiropractic Clinic showed improvements in over half the patients experiencing heart arrhythmias and fibrillations. More recent studies, in 1985 and 2001, showed similar results, this time monitored by electrocardiograms.

Of course, it is of utmost importance that heart patients get the proper medical evaluations and care for their heart condition, and should consult a physician immediately if their condition changes or worsens. After a thorough medical evaluation has ruled out immediate danger, chiropractic can offer a great deal of help to many of these patients.

Other recommendations obviously include lifestyle changes such as smoking cessation, stress management, and a healthy diet rich in vegetables and fruit and low in saturated fats.

If you or someone you know suffers from heart problems, maybe it's time for a chiropractic check-up. We invite you to call our office if you have any questions.

Please watch for our next column in two weeks.

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Disclaimer: The above represents the opinion of the authors, based on extensive research and years of clinical practice. It is not intended for self-diagnosis and treatment. Please consult a health care professional as your specific condition might require different recommendations.