

Chiropractors and Low Back Pain

The Lancet

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The editors of THE LANCET review the June 2nd 1990 British Medical Journal article by Meade: Low back pain of mechanical origin: randomized comparison of chiropractic and hospital outpatient treatment. The study used 741 patients. They note:

The article "showed a strong and clear advantage for patients with chiropractic."

The advantage for chiropractic over conventional hospital treatment was "not a trivial amount" and "reflects the difference between having mild pain, the ability to lift heavy weights without extra pain, and the ability to sit for more than one hour, compared with moderate pain, the ability to lift heavy weights only if they are conveniently positioned, and being unable to sit for more than 30 minutes."

"This highly significant difference occurred not only at 6 weeks, but also for 1, 2, and even (in 113 patients followed so far) 3 years after treatment."

"Surprisingly, the difference was seen most strongly in patients with chronic symptoms."

"The trial was not simply a trial of manipulation but of management" as 84% of the hospital-managed patients had manipulations.

"Chiropractic treatment should be taken seriously by conventional medicine, which means both doctors and physiotherapists."

"Physiotherapists need to shake off years of prejudice and take on board the skills that the chiropractors have developed so successfully."