

Low-Back Pain and Related Leg Complaints

Chiropractic spinal manipulation is widely used to treat low-back pain and related complaints.

Lawrence DJ, Meeker W, Branson R, Bronfort G, Cates JR, Haas M, Haneline M, Micozzi M, Updyke W, Mootz R, Triano JJ, Hawk C. Chiropractic Management of Low Back Pain and Low Back-Related Leg Complaints: A Literature Synthesis. *J Manipulative Physiol Ther* 2008 Nov;31(9):659-674.

THE OBJECTIVE of this literature synthesis was to provide a balanced interpretation of the literature to identify safe and effective treatment options for low-back pain and related leg complaints.

THIS STUDY conducted a search of literature on low-back pain through the following major healthcare databases: PubMed, Mantis and the Cochrane Database, yielding 807 source documents, from which guidelines, randomized controlled trials (RCTs), systematic reviews and cohort studies were selected for further review. A total of 12 guidelines documents, 64 RCTs, 20 systematic reviews/meta-analyses and 12 cohort studies were analyzed.

CONCLUSIONS

Existing research evidence on chiropractic management of low-back pain and related leg complaints shows the following:

- Spinal manipulation is used to reduce pain and improve function in patients with both chronic low-back pain and acute and sub-acute low-back pain.
- Patients undergoing spinal manipulative treatment for low-back pain often experience improvement in function, in addition to a reduction in their pain levels.
- When used in conjunction with spinal manipulation, exercise is likely to improve the patients' symptoms, increase the speed of recovery, and reduce the recurrence of pain.
- Exercise coupled with the reassurance of the healthcare provider that the patient will do well has also been shown valuable in patients with chronic low-back pain and low-back problems associated with radicular symptoms.
- There is less evidence for the use of spinal manipulation in the treatment of leg complaints related to low-back pain.
- Patients experiencing severe symptoms may benefit from pain management in collaboration with other healthcare providers, in addition to spinal manipulative treatment.

CAVEATS

There is limited evidence to predict patients' response to care or provide recommendations for frequency and duration of treatment.

LEARN MORE ABOUT chiropractic management of low-back pain at www.acatoday.org. For more information on chiropractic research, go to www.fcer.org and www.ccgpp.org.



The research described in this column comes from credible, peer-reviewed journals. It is intended to serve as a resource for practitioners and patients to assist them in consideration of various healthcare options and does not replace clinical judgment.