Could AFib Be Helped by Chiropractic?

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Exploring Alternative Therapies

Your heart is well connected to both parts of your nervous system – the sympathetic and parasympathetic. So if chiropractors work on the spine, affecting the nervous system directly through spinal manipulation, does it make sense that it's possible chiropractic adjustments could make a difference in your atrial fibrillation? Now, we will explore chiropractic for AFib.

What the Research Says

Let's look at some research to reason it through. At Logan College of Chiropractic in Missouri, 96 chiropractors investigated what their treatments were doing to the sympathetic and parasympathetic parts of the nervous system.

They used a heart rate variability device to collect data, along with subjective patient questionnaires before and after each chiropractic manipulation. The patients were followed for up to four weeks.

Here's What Happened After One Chiropractic Adjustment:

- There was a significant reduction in pain from 3.7 on the questionnaire to 2.1.
- Mean heart rate was reduced from 76.7 to 74.3.
- Other electrical components and frequency components taken by the device improved significantly.
- Pain was reduced significantly before and after each visit.
- The reduction of pain from each treatment was not maintained over the four weeks.
- The changes in the electrical components of the heart, total power of the heart and low-frequency components were statistically significantly improved.

Here's What Happened After Four Weeks of Adjustments:

Right here with this research, we have evidence that chiropractic treatment is positively affecting the heart.

Study #2

In another study that took place at New York Chiropractic College, chiropractors measured autonomic nervous system function in those who had an acute back or neck problem. Acute means the injury or pain that occurred recently in the past week.

They discovered that the interaction between the skin and blood vessel sympathetic neurons of the nervous system did change as a result of the injury; there was a greater number of sensory neuron responses, which caused changes in autonomic function. That's a mouthful! All it's saying though is chiropractic causes a deeper

reaction in the nervous system that can affect the heart rate and blood pressure.

Study #3

In one last study involving chiropractors at Sherman College of Straight Chiropractic, 47 patients between 25 and 55 years old were given a cervical or thoracic adjustment and heart rate, pulse pressure and blood pressure was checked.

They found that cervical adjustments may result in parasympathetic responses and thoracic adjustments caused sympathetic responses. They also found a correlation between the type of autonomic responses and the particular segment of the spine that was adjusted.

As you can see, no one can come right out and say chiropractic will help atrial fibrillation. However, taking all this information together suggests that chiropractic could be worth a try.

How to Select a Chiropractor for AFib

You really won't be selecting a chiropractor specifically for atrial fibrillation, so your questions when you call different chiropractic offices are these:

- How long have you been practicing?
- What methods of chiropractic do you use?
- Do you have any equipment in your office that patients who have a pacemaker or fibrillation should not be around?
- Have you treated patients with heart disease? How many? (Notice the question is not for heart disease)
- How do you work payments for your services?

Then give it a four-week trial. If you see improvement, stick it out for another month. You didn't get your AFib overnight, so some long-term treatments are going to be the best option.