

Lower Back Problems Effect the Way You Think

Published in the February 1st 1999 issue of "Spine" research journal, was a study that showed a link between chronic low back pain and slower reaction times, reduced short term memory, and certain motor tasks. The study measured subjects with chronic lower back pain using a computer to test their short term memory and reaction time to certain items that appeared on the screen.

The conclusion was that chronic **Lower Back Pain hampers short term memory and decreases the patients speed of process of certain information.**

In a related note the "Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics" July August 1999 issue published a pilot study comparing chiropractic care to acupuncture and medication for patients with chronic low back problems. The results were that no change took place with the acupuncture and medication group while significant changes occurred in the chiropractic group. Considering the information above about memory and reaction times we can see the profound positive effect chiropractic can have on these patients.

Study Shows Low Back Surgery No Better Than Rehabilitation

Research published in the May 28, 2005 British Medical Journal suggests that surgery to relieve chronic lower back pain is no better than intensive rehabilitation and nearly twice as expensive. The study did not look at the benefits of chiropractic care, but did compare patients who underwent surgery for lower back pain and those who had rehabilitation led by physiotherapists.

Dr. Jeremy Fairbank, an orthopedic surgeon and lead researcher at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Center in Oxford, England, along with his co-researchers studied 349 chronic back pain sufferers, defined as pain lasting more than 12 months. Of the 349 patients, 176 had spinal fusion surgery while the remainder underwent intensive rehabilitation involving exercises and cognitive behavioral therapy.

Dr. Fairbank stated, "**This is strong evidence that intensive rehabilitation is a good thing to do for people with chronic back pain who are thinking about having operations.**" The researchers concluded that there was no evidence that surgery was any better than the rehabilitation they compared the surgery to. However, there was a big difference in price with the surgical expense being nearly twice as expensive according to the study.

Helen Campbell of the University of Oxford summed up the results by commenting, "In the short term, compared with intensive rehabilitation, surgical stabilization of the spine as first line treatment for chronic low back pain patients who have already failed standard non-operative care seems not to be cost effective."