

Headaches, The Medical Profession and Chiropractic

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Until recently, the medical understanding of headaches has not taken into account the chiropractic model. While many people associate chiropractic care as a treatment for bad backs, there is growing documentation that chiropractic is also effective in the treatment of cervicogenic headaches, migraines and cluster headaches. In fact, the American Chiropractic Association reports that 14 percent of the public who see chiropractors presently go for headaches. The concept that headache pain can emanate from cervical dysfunction is still completely foreign to most of the medical profession.

Noted researcher Nikolai Bogduk, MD, PhD, professor of anatomy at Newcastle, Australia, commented:

"The people in control of the headache field seemingly have not, cannot, or will not, recognize this paradox ... that the model for cervicogenic headache is not only the best evolved of all headaches but is testable in vivo, in patients with headache complaints. No other form of headache has that facility."

Several years ago, a Canadian anesthesiologist, Peter Rothbart, MD, FRCPC, came to the same conclusions about cervicogenic headache. Dr. Rothbart made many observations in his own pain management practice which subsequently led to an article in the Toronto Star, the most widely read newspaper in Canada. The Toronto Star article, "A Pain in the Neck," was subtitled: "Chiropractors were right." "Many headaches are caused by damaged structures in the neck -- and scientific evidence proves it." The article explained that years ago, French medical professor Robert Maigne "came to believe that many headaches originated with a structural problem in the neck." He was "thought to be a lunatic," said Dr. Rothbart. But others took up Dr. Maigne's work, including Dr. Nik Bogduk.

In 1995, a team of MDs at Syracuse University established neck problems as the cause of many headaches "with scientific, anatomical proof". Dr. Rothbart termed the Syracuse results "a minor miracle." In the Toronto Star article, Dr. Rothbart made several insightful comments:

"Some brilliant people have put their hearts, souls and minds to this (headache) problem and haven't come up with anything. All we've been able to do is treat people with an array of medicines, one after the other, and hope the side effects won't be too bad."

"We couldn't believe it at first. We've been able to put together a scientific explanation for how neck structure causes headaches -- not all headaches, but a significant number of them."

"It's true that chiropractors have been saying this for years. Unfortunately, many (medical) doctors tend to have a jaundiced view of chiropractors, but they were right about headaches."

Dr. Rothbart's clinical experience and findings have led him to become a founder and president of the North American Cervicogenic Headache Society (NACHS). The NACHS is dedicated to establishing the place of cervicogenic headache in the minds and practices of those health care providers who treat headaches.

The traditional medical route for treating headaches often fails due to 6 misconceptions about headache relief.

1. Over-The-Counter Medication Treat The Cause Of Your Headache.

"Drugs only numb the pain. If these drugs treated the real cause, your headaches would go away permanently. None of us were born with too few Advil in our blood. A lack of drugs is not the cause."

2. Headache Medication Can't Harm You.

"On the contrary, drugs can cause side effects that can be far worse than the headache pain you're trying to relieve."

3. [Stress](#) Causes Headaches.

"Although [stress](#) is a part of life, it is not the cause of headaches. Rather, it's how your body adapts to [stress](#) that affects your health. Chiropractic care can provide ways to help you increase your body's ability to adapt to [stress](#) of any kind."

4. Headaches Go Away On Their Own.

"Without treating the cause, or root of the problem, they won't."

5. All Doctors Know How To Treat Headaches.

"If this were true, no one would suffer from headaches. Chiropractors offer natural alternatives that do not involve drugs or invasive treatments."

6. Your Problem Is Always Where Your Pain Is.

"In fact, not all headaches originate in the head. For instance, a person who suffered a neck injury at some point in their life, whether from a car accident, playing sports, or a fall as a child, could suffer head pain later on. These are called cervicogenic headaches because they result from tension of the neck and head muscles."

Every day, chiropractors hear stories from hundreds of people who have been suffering for years with pain and are at their wits end because the only thing offered to them by their physicians and specialists are more drugs. Chiropractic offers a safe, non-invasive treatment with documented results. I am sure many of you have questions, please do not hesitate to call us so we can discuss ways we can help .

Yours in Health

Dr. Bob Grace

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