

How many accidents have YOU prevented?

Charles S Masarsky

Abstract: To propose that a chiropractor may never really know who many accidents they prevent through their patient-centred care where the adjustment improves a person's reaction time and situational awareness. Chiropractic care improves how patients see their world.

Indexing Terms: chiropractic; reaction time; situational awareness.

Contagion of Trauma

Somewhere in the world today, someone will suffer a slip-and-fall accident on a busy flight of stairs or escalator. Elsewhere, someone will have a work-related accident in a busy factory, warehouse, kitchen, or store. On a crowded athletic field, someone will fall, and those behind them will not be able to avoid tripping over them. One person's accident frequently becomes more than one person's injury.

This situation becomes magnified on the roads. A motor vehicle accident does not always take place on a lonely byway. The driver's accident can involve other vehicles and pedestrians, as well as their own passengers. Such accidents often cause a traffic slowdown or even gridlock, forcing the drivers and those living and working in the neighbourhood to inhale elevated levels of pollution.

In this article, I will make the case that subluxation contributes significantly to this contagion of trauma.

... Chiropractic care changes how patients see their world and through improved situational awareness may help prevent accidents'



Attention Deficit (Potentially) Kills

How many times does a person encounter a hazard on the road? Or a slippery spot on a sidewalk or bathroom floor? In even the most ordinary life, situations that could cause injuries

ranging from an annoying bruise all the way to death are routinely encountered. Avoiding injury is not possible unless you notice the hazard is there. Drifting attention is a risk factor for injury.

In 2015, I reported comparisons of reverse digit span pre- and post-adjustment in 4 patients ranging in age from their 40s to their 60s. (1) This test is often used to monitor short term memory in concussion victims. One must focus on something to commit it to short term memory, so the same test can be used to measure the quality of attention. In all 4 cases, reverse digit span improved substantially after a chiropractic adjustment.

Although my brief reports were not published in a peer-reviewed journal, the results are consistent with those of other investigators. These more formal publications reported improvement in attention span and related functions in a variety of patients, including those with learning disabilities and developmental disorders. (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11). This small but compelling body of evidence strongly suggests subluxation tends to disrupt attention, while the chiropractic adjustment tends to improve it.

A Need for Speed

Even if a hazard is noticed, you must react to it in a timely way to avoid injury. Consider the number of accidents that could have been avoided if the driver hit the brakes or turned the wheel in time, or if the person beginning to slip on the icy sidewalk steadied themselves in time, etc. In many cases, the corrective response must be executed in a fraction of a second, even before a conscious decision can be made. These split-second responses are the domain of reaction time. A slow reaction time is a risk factor for injury.

Haavik and Murphy reported improved reaction time as measured by motor evoked potentials following cervical adjustments. (12) These findings are part of a small but compelling body of literature indicating chiropractic adjustments improve reaction time. (13, 14, 15)

The Contagion Accelerant

The chiropractic research on attention span and reaction time has important implications for the contagion of trauma. If a person develops a subluxation that limits their attention span and reaction speed to any measurable degree, they become more accident-prone than before. People who get into accidents frequently hurt other people. These people, in turn, are probably subluxated, and are at risk to hurt themselves and others. In this way, subluxation may be tantamount to a contagion accelerant.

Uncounted 'Saves'; Zero Medals

When your chiropractic adjustment improves the patient's reaction time or attention span, you may very well have enabled them to avoid an accident that very day. You will never know. In fact, some of these saves will involve people you have never met, and possibly you never will. The patient you adjusted avoids the hazard and goes on with their life. The people nearby never had any cause to realise they were in danger.

This is very different from the fireman that rescues the child from a burning building, or the lifeguard who saves a swimmer from drowning, or the military medical corpsman who braves live fire to snatch his or her comrade from the jaws of death. The 'saves' your adjustments have caused due to improved reaction time and attention span created no such drama. No commendation will be written for you; no medal will adorn your chest.

Yet, in the course of a chiropractic career, it is almost a mathematical certainty that you have prevented numerous accidents. It is pleasant to contemplate the benefits of our adjustments spreading unnoticed through the human community.

Private practice of chiropractic, Vienna VA

viennachiropractic@verizon.net

Cite: Masarsky CS. How many accidents have YOU prevented? The wide-angle lens. Asia-Pac Chiropr J. 2022;2.5. URL apcj.net/papers-issue-2-5/#MasarskyAccidents

About the author

Dr. Charles Masarsky has been in the private practice of chiropractic with Dr. Marion Todres-Masarsky since 1983. Their office is located in Vienna, Virginia, U.S.A in the suburbs of Washington, DC. He also offers continuing education programs for chiropractic colleges and associations. For information about his practice or his C.E. programs, please e-mail viennachiropractic@verizon.net.

References

1. Masarsky CS. Reverse Digit Span: A Useful Assessment Tool for Patients with and without Concussion. Dynamic Chiropractic, 2015; 33(15). Full text: <https://www.dynamicchiropractic.com//mpacms/dc/article.php?id=57442>.
2. Giesen JM, Center JB, Leach RA. An evaluation of chiropractic manipulation as a treatment of hyperactivity in children. J Manipulative Physiol Ther, 1989;12:353-363.
3. Phillips CF. Case study: the effect of utilizing spinal manipulation and craniosacral therapy as the treatment approach for attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder. Proceedings of the National Conference on Chiropractic and Pediatrics, International Chiropractors Association, Arlington, VA, 1991:57-64.
4. Thomas MD, Wood J. Upper cervical adjustments may improve mental function. J Man Med, 1992;6:215-216.
Arme J. Effects of biomechanical insult correction on attention deficit disorder. J Chiropr Case Rep, 1993;1(1):6-9.
5. Araghi GH. Oral Apraxia. A case study in chiropractic management. Proceedings of the National Conference on Chiropractic and Pediatrics, International Chiropractors Association, Arlington, VA, 1994:34-41.
6. Manuel JD, Fysh PN. Acquired verbal aphasia in a 7-year-old female: case report. J Clin Chiropr Pediatr, 1996;1:89-94.
7. Peet JB. Adjusting the hyperactive/ADD pediatric patient. Chiropr Pediatr, 1997;2(4):12-15.
8. Barnes T. Chiropractic management of the special needs child. Top Clin Chiropr, 1997;4(4):9-18.
9. Lovett L, Blum CL. Behavioral and learning changes secondary to chiropractic care to reduce subluxations in a child with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: a case study. Journal of Vertebral Subluxation Research, Oct. 4, 2006:1-6.
10. Pauli Y. Improvement in attention in patients undergoing network spinal analysis: a case series using objective measures of attention. Journal of Vertebral Subluxation Research, Aug. 23, 2007:1-9.
11. Haavik TH, Murphy B. Transient Modulation of Intracranial Inhibition Following Spinal Manipulation. Chiropr J Aust: Sep 2007(37:3): 106-116.
12. Abstract: https://www.chiroindex.org/?search_page=articles&action=&articleId=19787&search1=reaction%20time.
13. Lauro A, Mouch B. Chiropractic effects on athletic ability. Chiropractic Research and Clinical Investigation 1991;6:84-87.
14. Kelly DD, Murphy BA, Backhouse DP. Use of a mental rotation reaction-time paradigm to measure the effects of upper cervical adjusting on cortical processing. Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics 2000;23:246-251.
15. Lersa LB, Stinear CM, Lersa RA. The relationship between spinal dysfunction and reaction time measures. Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics 2005;28:502-507.