

October 2011

Chiropractors Warn About "Text Neck"

Several stories appeared in a number of publications warning people about the dangers of texting excessively. Chiropractors are leading the call of caution that texting for hours puts the neck in a position that creates health issues.

A CBS News story on October 10, 2011 advises the readers to "Add 'text neck' to your new world, digital dictionary". The problem is that continuously texting causes a person to lean their head forward for long periods of time thus causing a loss of the normal forward curve in the neck. Chiropractors have warned for years that a loss of forward curve in the neck leads to a variety of health issues. Texting is the latest and most popular new technology that leads to this neck problem.

This problem has become international as was pointed out in an October 6, 2011 story in a British publication, the Telegraph. The story quotes Dr. Rachael Lancaster, a chiropractor from Leeds England, "Text neck is caused by the neck being flexed for a prolonged period of time. Sufferers are increasing as the use of smart phones and tablet computers become more popular."

Dr. Lancaster likens it to putting other parts of your body into an awkward position for long periods of time. "Imagine sitting on your ankle sideways for 10 minutes.

It would feel stiff and sore when you returned it to its natural position. That is exactly what people are doing with their necks. If people continue to put their necks in these positions, the body will gradually adapt to the stresses."

Dr. Tim Hutchful, of the British Chiropractic Association noted that doctors are seeing a rising number of patients with similar neck problems. He explained the problem by saying, "When the head is over the shoulders it is a bit like a balanced see-saw, and when you move it forward you need to put a force in place to keep it in that position. The longer you are in that position for, the more the muscles have to accommodate it."

An October 7, 2011 story from MSNBC on this same subject quoted Texas chiropractor and spokesperson for the American Chiropractic Association Dr. Cynthia Vaughn who stated, "It's a known phenomenon and that's increasing and doctors need to educate their patients on the proper ergonomics of this." Dr. Vaughn continued by offering a practical solution to prolonged texting, "I tell my patients the easiest thing to do is pick up the phone and call people."



Drug Deaths Now Outnumber Traffic Fatalities in U.S.

The above headline comes from the September 17, 2011 edition of the LA Times. The story reports on data recently released from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, showing that as of 2009, deaths due to drugs exceeded the number of deaths due to automobile accidents.



The article noted that the increase was fueled by the jump in prescription drug overdoses. The authors wrote, "Public health experts have used the comparison (accident vs. drug deaths) to draw attention to the nation's growing prescription drug problem, which they characterize as an epidemic." The data showed that since the government started tracking drug related deaths in 1979, this was the first time that drug deaths have outpaced deaths due to automobile

accidents.

The report showed that the surge in drugs leading to deaths were mostly fueled by prescription pain and anxiety drugs such as OxyContin, Vicodin, Xanax and Soma. Laz Salinas, a sheriff's commander in Santa Barbara, where they have seen a dramatic rise in prescription drug deaths in recent years, commented, "The problem is right here under our noses in our medicine cabinets."

The article interviewed Lori Smith, a mother who lost her son to an overdose of prescription drugs just six months shy of his 16th birthday. She speculated on what happened by saying, "They said they will have parties where the kids will throw a bunch of pills in a bowl and the kids take them without knowing what they are," Lori said. "We called all of his friends, but no one would say they were with him. But he must have been with someone. You just don't do that by yourself."

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Sgt. Steve Opferman, head of a county task force on prescription drug-related crimes explained why he feels prescription drugs are more dangerous than illicit drugs. He explained, "People feel they are safer with prescription drugs because you get them from a pharmacy and they are prescribed by a doctor," Opferman said. "Younger people believe they are safer because they see their parents taking them. It doesn't have the same stigma as using street narcotics."

The article concluded with a statement from Amy S.B. Bohnert, a researcher at the University of Michigan Medical School who is studying ways to lower the risk of prescription drugs. She stated, "What's really scary is we don't know a lot about how to reduce prescription deaths."

Improvement in Autism Spectrum Disorder - A Case Study

From the September 1, 2011 issue of the Journal of Pediatric, Maternal & Family Health comes a case study documenting the improvement of a young boy suffering with Pervasive Developmental Disorder and Sensory Processing Disorder.

The authors explain that Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) are a group of developmental brain disorders characterized by impaired social interaction, lack of communication skills, and limited range of activities and interests. Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) and Sensory Processing Disorder fall under the category of ASD problems. They further note that "Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD) refers to a group or range of disorders characterized by a variety of delays in the development of socialization and communication skills. Symptoms may be seen as early as infancy and will typically show up before 3 years of age."

In this case a young boy, just 3 months short of his third birthday, was brought to the chiropractor with the medical diagnoses of Pervasive Developmental Disorder and Sensory Processing Disorder. The history noted that the boy was born with a forceps delivery and was kept in the neonatal intensive care unit for 4 days with a fever. At the time the boy was brought to the chiropractor he was already behind in many developmental processes including communication skills, cognitive skills, fine motor skills, as well as social and emotional skills. He preferred to crawl rather than walk and was having difficulty crawling in a coordinated manner.

After an examination, chiropractic care was initiated for correction of vertebral subluxations that were detected. Specific chiropractic adjustments were given at the rate of 2 visits per week. The spine and nervous system were monitored regularly for subluxation.

The study reports that after 2.5 months of chiropractic care the first reevaluation was performed which showed improvements in the boy's skills. The authors commented that, "The patient's mother reported that her son's communication skills had improved dramatically, he was walking and even starting to run." Additionally, the occupational and physical therapists that were working with the boy both noticed significant improvement and stated that they had never had a case improve this dramatically in such a short period of time. After ten months of care the boy had improved dramatically in many areas. He improved greatly in the areas of verbal skills, and his sensory processing problems had diminished. Probably one of the most dramatic improvements was reported by the boy's mother who observed that her son had begun to read at a level above his age.

The authors of the study explained the chiropractic approach by stating in their conclusion, "There is a growing body of evidence in the literature relating chiropractic adjustments to the resolution of a variety of health problems. Chiropractic care when used to correct disturbances in the nervous system (subluxations) is not a treatment for any disease, illness or injury. However by reducing subluxations, a person's body will be better able to repair, heal, function and develop.



Infant's Constipation Helped with Chiropractic - Documented Case Study

In the September 22, 2011 issue of the Journal of Pediatric, Maternal & Family Health a case study was published that documents chiropractic care helping a baby with severe constipation and excessive crying.

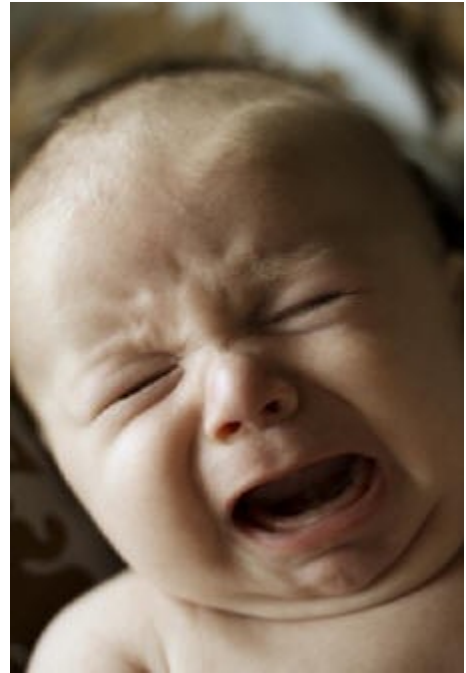
In this case an 11 week old boy was brought to the chiropractor by his mother. The boy's mother related that her baby was fussy since birth and that several times a day, the baby was uncomfortable and would cry and scream as if he was in a great deal of pain. These episodes would last up to 2 hours at a time.

The mother explained that these fits of crying seemed to be associated with her son trying to have a bowel movement as he would seem to be grunting and pushing without any success. Over the previous 8 weeks, it was reported that the child only had 5 bowel movements. Medical attempts to correct this issue included over the counter remedies and leg exercises. His bowel issues were affecting his eating and sleeping habits.

A chiropractic examination was performed where it was noticed that the baby's color was grey looking, and his abdomen was distended. Additionally, there were several spinal findings that indicated the presence of nerve system irritation from subluxations at the top and bottom of the child's spine.

Chiropractic care was initiated with a specific set of pediatric spinal adjustments being administered to the baby. The mother brought the baby back in six days for a follow-up visit. Upon her arrival she informed the doctor that after her son's first adjustment, her baby had his first bowel movement without assistance. By the third chiropractic visit the boy's mother reported that her son had an increased number of bowel movements as well as an improvement in his overall demeanor, a reduction in crying, and improvement in his ability to sleep.

The study notes that after about 10 weeks of chiropractic care, the child's bowel habits had returned to a normal level that would be expected in a child unaffected by constipation.



Facial Spasm, Neck Pain and Lower Back Pain Helped with Chiropractic - Case Study

A case study published in the August 15, 2011 issue of the Journal of Upper Cervical Chiropractic Research documents the improvement with chiropractic care, of a patient suffering with chronic hemifacial spasm, neck pain, and low back pain.



The author of the study explains that hemifacial spasm is a rare condition characterized by irregular clonic twitching of the muscles. The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke describe it as "Hemifacial spasm is a neuromuscular disorder characterized by frequent involuntary contractions (spasms) of the muscles on one side (hemi-) of the face (facial)." Medical treatment recommendations include injections of botulinum toxin into the affected areas, or surgery.

In this case a 48-year-old male presented with left hemifacial spasms that he had been suffering with for the past year. In addition, he was also experiencing significant neck pain. The facial spasms were causing his left eye to blink or even completely close at times. He reported that his neurologist had tried to treat his problems with Botox injections, but these only gave

short term help. Additionally, he also reported a chronic, off-and-on lower back pain of moderate intensity.

A chiropractic examination was performed which included spinal x-rays. The x-rays noted a reversal of the curve in his neck. Normally, the neck should have a bowing arch forward. In this case the neck was curved in the reverse direction with the bow being to the back of the patient. A determination was made that sublaxations of the spine were present causing nervous system interference.

Care was initiated consisting of specific adjustments of his neck and lower spine. The author of this article reported that after just three visits the patients problems were completely resolved. After a three month follow-up the patient was still free of the symptoms that he had originally complained of.

Medical Group to Say Men Don't Need Prostate Cancer Screenings

The above headline comes from an October 7, 2011 story on CNN, based on a draft recommendation by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force that reads, "The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends against prostate-specific antigen (PSA)-based screening for prostate cancer."

According to their website, "The USPSTF is an independent panel of non-Federal experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine and is composed of primary care providers (such as internists, pediatricians, family physicians, gynecologists/obstetricians, nurses, and health behavior specialists)."

The CNN article notes that this is the same group that recently released a recommendation stating that women in their 40's do not need regular mammograms. One of the problems that the USPSTF identified is that the prostate-specific antigen test, known commonly as "PSA" can show up to 80 percent false positives leading to needless medical procedures and dangers.

The USPSTF explains the how and why they make such recommendations by saying, "For the USPSTF to recommend a service, the benefits of the service must outweigh the harms. The USPSTF focuses on maintenance of health and quality of life as the major benefits of clinical preventive services, and not simply the identification of disease."

Dr. Kenneth Lin, senior author of the USPSTF research paper on which the draft statement is based, pointed out that only a small percentage of men testing positive from PSA tests have the type of prostate cancer that is fast growing and possibly fatal. His research suggests that the harm of further testing and treatment outweigh the possible benefits to the population at large. Dr. Lin commented, "Maybe you should get tested if you have this horrible family history where everyone gets prostate cancer before the age of 50. But for most men, testing is harmful."

Dr. Lin and the USPSTF have come under severe criticism for their recommendations by groups that support such testing. He stated his frustration with the politics and interference from outside groups to the USPSTF's recommendation. He noted that the USPSTF was prepared to make its recommendations on prostate screening over a year ago, but those recommendations were withheld because of the negative feedback they received after their recommendations about mammography. Dr. Lin, left the USPSTF in November and is now an assistant professor of family medicine at Georgetown University Medical Center. He explained his frustration in the closing of the CNN article by saying, "I was so frustrated with the political interference, and this was the final straw."



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