How Chiropractic Care Can Lessen Depression

by LANA BARHUM

Easing Pain to Ease Depression

You probably associate chiropractic care with managing aches and pain from your daily life. Or you may have pain from a car accident or other injury. Sometimes, the cause of your chronic pain might be depression.

According to the non-profit organization, The Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA), major depressive disorder is the leading cause of disability in the United States among people under age 45— more than 15 million Americans are affected.

Chiropractic care and depression relief are strongly correlated. While medication is generally prescribed to treat depressive symptoms, you may want a natural and non-medicinal approach.

Chiropractic care might be an option for you and here is what you need to know:

History and Understanding of Chiropractic Care and Depression

As far back as the 1920s, chiropractic adjustments were used to help people struggling with mental health issues, including depression. The Chiropractic Psychopathic Sanitarium, located in Davenport, Iowa, at the time, had a cure and discharge rate of 65 percent while other institutes not employing chiropractic care had much lower rates.

Chiropractic hospitals throughout the 1960s also promoted chiropractic care and adjustments for conditions considered irreversible. Unfortunately, many of these places closed due to insurance changes in the 1950s and 60s.

Chiropractic care deals with improving the nervous system, the very system that controls your mental and emotional health. Adjustments to certain parts of the body allow for blood to flow better and also relax the muscles.

That type of stress relief can really help you when you are struggling with depression. After all, stress and depression are connected.

What the Research Says About Chiropractic Care and Depression Relief

There have been numerous studies showing successful connections between chiropractic care, pain, and emotional healing.

Results of a survey reported in the *Journal of Upper Cervical Chiropractic Research* found 76 percent of patients who underwent chiropractic care saw improvements in their emotional and mental health. Moreover, these patients reported positive changes to stress and increased life enjoyment while they were receiving chiropractic care.

Another study, with results published in the *Annals of Vertebral Subluxation Research*, involved 15 people suffering from upper cervical pain and depression. With chiropractic care and spinal adjustments, 11 of the 15 study participants showed major improvement in their depressive symptoms.

Both of these studies reveal promising results for people with depression looking for natural ways to improve mental health. Sometimes results from chiropractic care can be long lasting as they allow the body to heal from tissue and nerve damage associated with pain and stress.

How Chiropractic Care Can Help With Depression

One theory is that chiropractic care and depression relief are linked because of the decrease in pain.

If you live with chronic pain, you know it has a serious effect on your mood and overall mental health. If your spine can be adjusted and properly aligned, pain can be improved and depression alleviated.

One study published in the *Journal of Upper Cervical Chiropractic Research* reported on patients who participated in 12 sessions of chiropractic care. Muscle tension in these patients decreased as well as depressive symptoms and anxiety.

Another reason that chiropractic care may help you is because pain is an actual cause of depression. Studies show that when you are living with chronic pain, you are three to four times more likely to become depressed than someone not in pain.

One study of depressed inpatients, reported in the journal *Psychiatry*, found that 92 percent had pain at admission and 76 percent had multiple pain complaints. Those complaints were related to depression and anxiety, but complaints of pain decreased once depression did.

If you cannot break the cycle of pain, your depression is likely to get worse. It is very possible chiropractic care can help decrease your pain and depressive symptoms and allow you to feel both mentally and physically healthy.

A third reason chiropractic care may help is because misalignments may impact your nervous system. After all, we all know our moods have a lot to do with body chemistry.

Spinal misalignment is believed to put pressure on the part of the brain responsible for neurological and chemical function. While medication can alter these chemical imbalances, it is possible spine realignment can do the same thing naturally.

It is important to note that while chiropractic care does relieve pain associated with depression, it won’t cure depression. You also don’t have to be in pain to visit a chiropractor; it is perfectly acceptable to just want to improve your body’s imbalances.

Conclusion

People with chronic pain and depression often struggle to have a good quality of life. Pain affects sleep, daily routines, and even relationships and the combination of all these leads to more depression and more chronic pain.

In some cases, depression may occur before pain issues start, but nonetheless, pain and depression can lead to a vicious cycle.

The association between chiropractic care and depression is strong. If it is possible chiropractic adjustments can help you to restore mobility and alleviate physical pain, then it is worth a try. If your pain is relieved, it is also likely your mood will recover and so will your quality of life.