

I have always respected Consumer Reports for their typically unbiased reviews of consumer products. Normally they purchase products and do comparison testing to determine which products work best and provide the best value. Consumer Reports can be an invaluable aid to consumers looking for the truth behind the hype often found in advertising.

A number of years ago, they published an article about chiropractic care. Instead of performing their own testing of the effectiveness of chiropractic care, they chose to simply interview several chiropractic experts. I completely understand why they didn't do their own testing. Health care testing is very expensive and takes many months to do properly. An organization such as Consumer Reports would not have the budget to perform this type of testing reliably.

Unfortunately, they chose to interview individuals who had no real understanding of chiropractic and in one case they interviewed an outspoken critic of chiropractic who has been discredited a number of times in legal cases where he was found to be extremely biased and have no real expertise in the subject. As a result, the article was not favorable for chiropractic.

In their most recent publication, they reported on treatments for back pain. Instead of asking "experts" they chose to survey their readers. They wanted to find out what procedures the average individual finds most effective for treating back pain. The survey asked about the effectiveness of chiropractic, physical therapy, acupuncture, physician specialists such as orthopedists, and primary care medical doctors.

The provider whose care the survey respondents were most satisfied with was care provided by chiropractors. The care that the respondents were least satisfied with was the care provided by primary care medical doctors. Exercise was found to be the most helpful of the self-help approaches, however it was still ranked well below the satisfaction level that chiropractic care provided.

According to this report by Consumer Reports, chiropractic had the highest level of satisfaction for the treatment of back pain. It is important to remember, however, that chiropractic care is helpful for a wide variety of conditions, not just back pain.