

The typical patient in a chiropractor's office complains of neck and back pain. Contrary to popular belief, however, chiropractors help patients from infants to the elderly suffering with a wide variety of conditions. I would like to illustrate two interesting examples that I have cared for recently.

Both patients are very pleasant women in their 80's. Both were suffering from conditions that were caused by misalignments in their upper necks, although their symptoms had nothing to do with neck pain.

One woman had been experiencing a loud thumping sound in her ears. The problem had started a couple weeks prior to her first visit. Other doctors were at a loss as to the cause or appropriate treatment of her condition. The problem was not only annoying during the day, but it prevented her from sleeping at night.

Examination revealed significant malfunction of her upper neck. The nerves that pass through this area can influence brain function as well as function of the special senses such as hearing and vision. There is no way to know in advance if correcting the misalignments in her neck would change her condition. Since it would not likely do her any harm she felt it was worth a try.

Most patients begin to show improvement in their symptoms within a few visits, however she took longer than average. In fact, I treated her 12 times before she began to show improvement.

The other patient was also suffering from a relatively rare condition. She was experiencing a form of Tourette's Syndrome that resulted in frequent vocal tics. She would make uncontrolled clicking sounds with her tongue. Not only was this embarrassing when shopping and in other public places, but it was preventing normal sleep, just as the first patient in this column. Also, like the first patient, she had problems in her neck that could be the source.

This patient took even longer to help, over 20 visits. Some patients would have ended care prematurely, thinking that chiropractic care would not help, but this patient had few other options. The typical treatment for Tourette's involves powerful medications that do not actually correct the problem and have numerous side effects. Her patience was rewarded. The tics are nearly gone and she is able to sleep normally again.

I share this with you to let you know that the nerves that pass through the spine impact the entire body. Malfunction of these nerves can have effects that few would imagine, even the other doctors who treated these patients.

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