

Improvement in Autism with Chiropractic - a Case Study

A case study appearing in the July 5, 2010 issue of the Journal of Pediatric, Maternal and Family Health, documented the case of a 6 year old boy who was diagnosed with Autism by a neurologist, and was helped by chiropractic care. According to the case study authors, autism is defined as a brain development disorder that causes impaired social interaction, decreased communication ability, restrictive repetitive or stereotypical behaviors, and decreased cognitive and learning abilities.

In reviewing previous studies, the authors note that the number of autism cases in Britain in 2005 was reported to be 16.8 per 10,000 children, while in the United States in that same year, the rate was 22.0 per 10,000. The latest numbers released in a report by the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH), which is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the US Department of Health and Human Services, shows that as of 2009, a full 1% (1 per 100) of all US children currently have an autism spectrum disorder.

In this case a 6 year old boy was brought to a chiropractor's office with autism which had been diagnosed by a neurologist one year earlier. The boy exhibited loss of social skills, inability to make eye contact, constant head rocking, and a jabbering type of speech pattern with minimal vocalizations. He had been subjected to a battery of tests including an EEG and MRI along with neurological consultations. All tests were negative for brain pathology and therefore an autism diagnosis was made. The boy had received all his vaccinations and was on daily Ritalin. He was getting twice weekly speech therapy by the school psychologist, who also confirmed the diagnosis of autism.

When the boy was brought to the chiropractor's office his mother was asked to fill out an Autism Treatment Evaluation Checklist (ATEC) in order to have a point of comparison for the monitoring of future clinical changes in the boy. This test is designed to record the patients communication/speech abilities, sociability, sensory/cognitive awareness, and health/physical behavior. The chiropractic examination showed significant restriction of neck movement and multiple areas of spinal misalignments. It was determined that multiple vertebral subluxations were present.

Care was initiated for specific correction of the subluxations. After the 4th visit the boy's mother mentioned that her son no longer rocked his head and was jabbering less. After his 6th chiropractic adjustment, the case study documented that the child began spelling out the words on video cassette covers, which is something he had never done before. By the 7th week the mother reported that the child began to vocalize his name, as well as the words that he had been spelling. Improvement continued and by the 12th week of care it was reported that the child showed improvement in school and was performing exceptionally well in math and was reading in class.

In their conclusion, the authors of this study wrote, "This case demonstrates that there is a possible link between chiropractic care and the reduction of autistic signs and symptomatology, as seen by the improvements in subjective and objective findings."