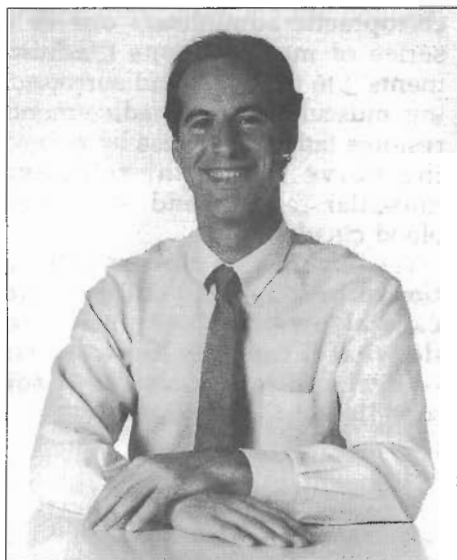


Chiropractic and Stress Management

*Rule No. 1
Don't sweat
the small stuff.*

*Rule No. 2
It's all small stuff.
And if you can't fight
and you can't flee,
flow.*



By Mark Schillinger, D.C.

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responsibilities and concerns about finances and personal achievements.

It is important to remember that regardless of the origin of a disorder, its effects on the human body will manifest in the nervous system. The nervous system is the organizer and coordinator of all bodily processes. All other systems depend upon the integrity of the nervous system to function properly. This includes the circulatory, respiratory, digestive, reproductive, endocrine (hormonal), and musculo-skeletal systems. Therefore, the most direct method of presenting and correcting illness is directed toward balancing the nervous system. This is precisely the pathway that chiropractic and stress management care utilize.

At this point, we need to define chiropractic and stress before we can discuss how these health care systems work to restore the nervous system.

Chiropractors work primarily with the spinal column because it houses and protects the spinal cord—the "switchboard" of the nervous system through which nerves pass from the brain as they carry nerve supply to all parts of the body. The nerves branch off the spinal bones (vertebrae). When these vertebrae are out of alignment there can be nerve interference and irritation with the normal activity of the nerves. This interference can disturb normal function throughout the body and cause many diseases. Similarly, all diseases affect the nervous system and can then cause vertebrae to become misaligned (subluxation complex) as a reaction. Chiropractors are specialists of the nervous system and are trained to diagnose and treat disorders of the nervous system and their accompanying symptoms.

Stress, in its negative sense, may be simply defined as an imbalance of

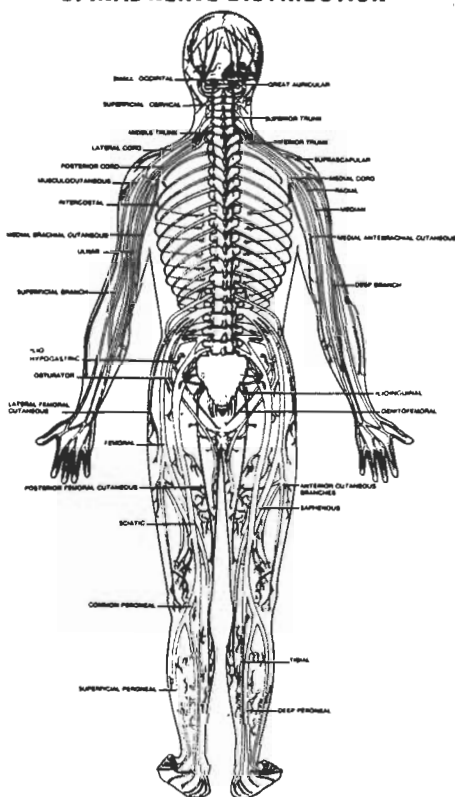
The purpose of this article is to provide a brief outline about two approaches to health care that are quickly gaining wider acceptance within the health services system. Chiropractic care and stress management care present procedures that are conservative and effective in disease prevention and wholistic care. Both of these health systems do not use drugs or surgery. This reason alone has caused the increased popularity of these systems. In addition, Chiropractic and Stress Management care emphasize more responsibility in the healing process on the part of the patient.

The most common complaints that people bring to their doctors are headache, backache, and fatigue. These and other illnesses may have a physical, chemical or mental/emotional origin. Physical illness can be caused by accidents, strains from improper body movement and postural stress. Chemical causes of illness include nutritional and/or dietary disorders and reactions to environmental toxins. Mental and emotional illness are most commonly stress related, i.e. worry and anxiety about family and job

bodily system(s) due to excessive stimulus. This irritating stimulus can be physical, chemical or mental. This leads to an increase in the rate of wear and tear in the body. Medical research has suggested that up to eighty percent of all illness is stress related! (There are now over 200,000 scientific articles related to stress research).

The most common symptoms naturally include headache, backache and fatigue as well as cardiovascular disorders (high blood pressure, arteriosclerosis, etc.) digestive problems (ulcers, colitis, etc.) and sleeping difficulties.

SPINAL NERVE DISTRIBUTION



There are two principles that uniquely bind chiropractic and stress management care. The first is the principle of **MOVEMENT**. In stress management care, it is imperative for the patient to realize that most emotional issues cannot be fully resolved in one day. Life is a process and revelations about one's life occur over a period of time. Thus, stress management strategies are directed at providing for positive emotional movement in resolving our issues.

Chiropractic is founded on the premise that the body heals itself. It

can do so when the nervous system is free from any interference in nerve transmission to the body. When there is loss of proper bodily motion, muscles lose their natural tone causing nerves to become irritated. Therefore, full range of motion of the musculo-skeletal system is essential to nervous system integrity. Chiropractic manipulation is directed toward increasing range of motion and decreasing muscular restrictions.

The second principle relating chiropractic and stress management is the phenomenon of **REFLEXES**. A reflex occurs when one body system is unbalanced and causes another system to function improperly. It is well accepted that our mental/emotional condition affects our physical state. Perhaps the best known reaction of the body to emotional stress is the neck muscle tension and headache occasioned by emotional stress. This mechanism is known as a psychosomatic (muscle) reflex. A similar mechanism occurs when emotional stress causes a stomach ulcer. This is a psychovisceral (organ) reflex.

Chiropractors have long observed that organ or muscle disorders can cause mental/emotional stress. How does this happen? The spinal cord is the switch board of the nervous system. The message from the diseased body part communicates to the brain via the spinal cord. This irritated nerve signal, ending in the brain, causes mental agitation. This is known as a somato-psychic or visceropsychic reflex.

Prolonged muscular tension, regardless of where it manifests in the body, often leads to personality and behavioral changes. This phenomena has been observed by many of the great founders of body-oriented therapies. Moshe Feldenkrais² in his book *Body and Mature Behavior* states: "Muscular tension and anxiety are invariably so closely interwoven in all states of emotional disorder that it is difficult to see how any real advancement towards clearer understanding of the nature of cures is possible without greater knowledge of the phenomenon of anxiety".

Alexander Lowen³ in his book *Physical Dynamics of Character Structure* states "There is no neurotic

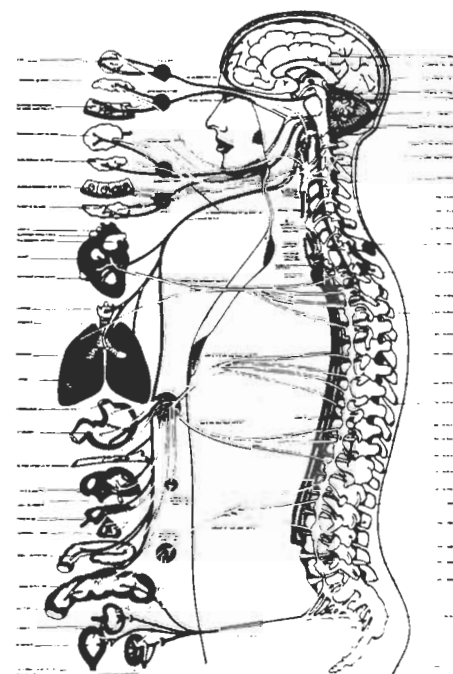
problem which does not manifest in each aspect of the individual's function. As an important structural element in the body, a weakness in the backbone must be reflected in a serious personality disturbance."

The founder of Chiropractic, D. P. Palmer⁴ in his first book *The Science, Art and Philosophy of Chiropractic* states, "Life is the expression of tone. Tone is the normal degree of nerve tension . . . the cause of disease is any variation of tone—nerves too tense or too slack."

We must now ask the obvious question. How does chiropractic and stress management care alleviate the symptoms and, more importantly, extinguish the source of nervous system imbalance?

Chiropractic ("by hand") involves touch; this factor alone sets the stage for release of muscular tension. The chiropractic administers one or a series of manipulations ("adjustments") to the spine and surrounding musculature. The adjustments restores fatigue or stress by removing nerve irritation, releasing muscular tension and improving blood circulation.

The combination of stress reduction techniques and chiropractic care allows the body/mind to do what it innately knows best: to heal and rejuvenate itself for vital living!



AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM