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Commentary

Preventing Alzheimer's

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Imagine how different the world would be if neurodegenerative diseases like dementia, Alzheimer's, MS, and Parkinson's could be prevented. The truth is that we don't need to imagine it. The tools to create this world have been at our fingertips since 1895, when Daniel David Palmer performed the first chiropractic adjustment on a deaf man and actually improved his hearing. In reality, such spinal adjustments been done for millennia. Palmer was simply the first to codify it in America.

Maintaining proper alignment of the upper cervical spine optimizes blood circulation to the brain and allows the cerebral spinal fluid to do its job. Any traumatic event, including seemingly minor auto accidents, concussions, and sport injuries, may cause a misalignment of the first cervical vertebra (Atlas). In turn, this spinal misalignment, or subluxation, may cause kinesiopathology, neuropathology, myopathology, histopathology, and even biochemical abnormalities, all of which may, or may not, be accompanied by pain. Since people usually go to a chiropractor only when they experience pain, they may have untreated misalignments that initiate the degenerative process, eventually leading to Alzheimer's.

There are several very popular books out now that promote prevention of Alzheimer's disease, two of which are *The End of Alzheimer's* by Dale Bredesen, M.D., and *The Alzheimer's Solution* by Dean and Ayesha Sherzai, M.D. These books do not guarantee results, however. Both have received praise for their smart, practical approaches and thorough theoretical and clinical research, backing up those approaches. That said, neither Bredesen nor team Sherzai discuss the importance of proper alignment of the upper cervical spine, or neck. These neck adjustments are not merely a "snap crackle and pop," but a sophisticated, extremely gentle, and precise maneuver used to straighten cervical range of motion. Maintaining such alignment ensures first that the brain receives all the necessary nutrients, and second that toxic by-products are eliminated from the brain. It is all so simple. Those specializing in the care of the upper neck, use CT scans, MRIs, and X-rays to demonstrate the dynamic relationship between structure and

function. In fact, pre-and post-scans clearly show the opening of blood vessels, which normalizes blood flow, and proves that neck adjustments increase blood flow to the brain.

Twenty-five years ago, I helped reduce the symptoms in a woman with MS by gently keeping her Atlas in alignment. At that time, I did not understand the significance of what I was doing, but after hearing that other chiropractors had similar results, I began to understand the importance of structural alignment in MS. Now, with CT scans and MRIs, it is not just simply a belief that chiropractic helps neurodegenerative diseases, but a provable fact. Today there is a diplomate program within the chiropractic field to address this relationship between the brain, the 1st cervical, and the 2nd cervical vertebras. A misalignment in this area can choke, or pinch the nerve transmission, in addition to causing blood flow interference. It is not just trauma that relates to this part of the spine, but high blood pressure. Today, about 40% of Americans suffer from high blood pressure and the numbers are going up. Spinal care for the first neck bone helps to reduce high blood pressure [1].

While the cause of Alzheimer's is unknown, current medical research indicates that herpes viruses may be to blame [2-4]. This is difficult to investigate, however, since most herpes viruses are often hiding, or latent, in the body. On the other hand, if in five years it is determined that herpes viruses do, in fact, cause Alzheimer's, it would slow down genetic research, along with the present day approach of managing symptoms. The good news is that there is another way, and it is already being utilized. A specialty within the chiropractic field, the orthospinology procedure is a painless spinal correction that restores body alignment and activates the body's natural self-healing ability (https://mayerchiropractic.com/research/) [5]. Additionally, the studies of Dr. Scott Rosa support the importance of imaging the biomechanics of craniocervical syndrome [6]. Indeed, former Chicago Bears quarterback Jim McMahon claims that Dr. Rosa has "literally saved his life" after McMahon suffered at least three concussions and was diagnosed with early dementia [7].

Alzheimer's costs Americans a whopping $277 billion a year, not to mention the pain it causes its sufferers, and the devastating effects it has on their families. Currently, there are more than five million Americans with Alzheimer's, with a new diagnosis being made every 65 seconds. There will be an estimated new 500,000 diagnoses this year [8]. Ensuring proper spinal alignment helps the nervous system, brain, and blood flow function. If we combined medical research and chiropractic application, it could literally change the world.

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