

OSTEOPATHS CLAIM “MANIPULATION” CURES EAR INFECTION

The WNBC segment on osteopathic manipulation for otitis media contained such biased and misleading information that it is difficult to believe it was not a deliberate attempt to malign chiropractic.

Since 1992, The Chiropractic Journal, a publication of the World Chiropractic Alliance (WCA), has published information about the effectiveness of chiropractic adjustments on childhood ear infections, referencing scientific studies on the topic dating back to 1971. In addition, the WCA’s “HealthWatch” e-newsletter has for years been educating the public about the risks of antibiotic and surgical treatment for this condition.

A simple search of the Internet would have led WNBC reporters to an abundance of information about chiropractic and ear infections. Instead, they chose to ignore more than three decades of scientific information and labeled this recent research “groundbreaking.”

The news segment was also filled with unsubstantiated claims about osteopathy’s superiority to chiropractic, saying that osteopathic manipulation was “gentler” than chiropractic adjustments. There is simply no basis for such a subjective statement. The two techniques are different, but not because one is gentler than the other.

A chiropractic adjustment is the specific application of force to facilitate the body’s correction of vertebral subluxation. In contrast, manipulation is defined in “Dorland’s Illustrated Medical Dictionary” as “the forceful, passive movement of a joint beyond its active limit of motion.”

It does not imply the use of precision, specificity, or the correction of vertebral subluxation. Doctors of chiropractic provide care to hundreds of thousands of children each year and have built a well-deserved reputation for being gentle and extremely safe.

The WNBC story does make one valid point: Parents should only go to doctors well trained in the procedures that will most effectively help their children. That means their first trip should be to a doctor of chiropractic, whose education includes extensive training in spinal adjusting – and more classroom hours studying anatomy, physiology and orthopedics than that of the typical M.D.

For WNBC to imply that osteopathic manipulation is superior to chiropractic in addressing ear infections or any other childhood health concern is either sloppy journalism or a deliberate attempt to mislead viewers. Either way, the failure to provide complete, unbiased and accurate information on important health issues jeopardizes the already diminishing credibility of the news media.

For more information on children’s ear infections and chiropractic for children, the WCA suggests reading the following:

Chiropractic and otitis media by Dr. Christopher Kent
<http://www.worldchiropracticalliance.org/tcj/1996/oct/oct1996kent.htm>

Childhood ear infections
<http://www.worldchiropracticalliance.org/tcj/1997/jan/jan1997warners.htm>

Ear infections and antibiotics: An antiquated paradigm
<http://www.worldchiropracticalliance.org/tcj/1999/apr/apr1999twarner.htm>

Business magazine probes medical research ethics

<http://www.worldchiropracticalliance.org/tcj/1994/nov/nov1994d.htm>

Surgery not the answer for children's ear infections

<http://www.wcanews.com/archives/1999/Dec/dec99f.htm>

Antibiotics seldom help childhood ear infections

<http://www.wcanews.com/archives/2002/dec0402c.htm>

Doctors still too quick to prescribe antibiotics for ear infections

<http://www.wcanews.com/archives/2001/feb/feb2601d.htm>

Too many children still given antibiotics for ear infections

<http://www.wcanews.com/archives/2000/Sep/sep0400a.htm>

Statement in response to attacks by pediatric publications

<http://www.wcanews.com/archives/2000/May/may0100wca.htm>