

Chiropractic Restores Normal Function In Failed Spinal Surgery

The March 19, 2007 issue of the Journal of Vertebral Subluxation Research reports on a case study involving a patient suffering from a failed spinal surgery that did not change his pain symptoms or restore spinal function. After a short course of chiropractic care, he experienced a return to normal function and alignment.

Eleven months before his first chiropractic visit, the patient had experienced a work injury that caused him to have constant, severe low back pain with numbness down the left leg and into his foot. Occasionally, he would also experience numbness and aching down the right leg as well. Five months after the accident he underwent a double laminectomy that removed the back portion of two vertebrae to relieve the pressure on his spinal cord. He was prescribed a narcotic pain medication that he had been taking twice a day since the surgery.

At his initial chiropractic examination he reported low back and left leg pain measuring an 8 on a 0-10 (10 being the highest pain level) pain scale. In addition, he registered a 74% disability on the Oswestry chronic low back pain disability questionnaire. His low back range of motion was severely restricted in all aspects and his left Achilles reflex was absent. His X-rays indicated serious misalignments and the resulting distorted posture.

The patient was placed on a 3 visits per week schedule and re-examinations were performed every 12 visits. On the first re-exam, the patient's pain level had dropped from an 8 to a 2 and the disability rating had decreased from 74% to a 40% disability. Range of motion greatly improved and the Achilles reflex was beginning to return.

After nine-months of chiropractic care (108 visits), his pain level dropped to 0, range of motion was within normal limits and the Achilles reflex was present but reduced. At this point, the patient also reported that he no longer needed to take the pain medications. His X-rays revealed that his spinal misalignment had improved significantly along with the resulting postural distortions.

The average cost of a laminectomy is \$82,614. Considering that 15% of spinal surgeries fail, costs can run as high as \$500,000 including repeat surgeries and ongoing disability. This patient spent \$4,188 on chiropractic care that restored normal function and removed the symptoms the surgery failed to resolve.