

Chiropractic as vaccine

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Narrative: This paper presents a short overview of political history around vaccines and concludes that part of the reason with the success of Chiropractic could lie in correcting the underlying joint dysfunction thereby preventing patients from receiving treatments of unproven cost utility or dubious efficacy from medical or PT providers.

Indexing terms: Chiropractic; vaccine; vaccination.

Introduction

The concept of an *'ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure'* is an adage embraced on many health issues from toothpaste to prevent cavities, to vitamins/mineral supplements to boost overall immunity, (1) including a study delineating *The Role of Micronutrients to Support Immunity for COVID-19 Prevention*.

... Chiropractic may act as a vaccine against ineffective medical and PT intervention ...'

Although a massive vaccination campaign was credited with diminishing the COVID pandemic, vaccines remain controversial.

But many people objected to mandatory vaccinations since the days in 1901 when the smallpox vaccines were developed that led to a famous court case in 1905 when the US Supreme Court decided its first vaccine-related case, *Jacobson v. Massachusetts*. The litigation posed the question: *'Can a state enact a law-making vaccination compulsory during a public health crisis? basically allowing the state to "sacrifice a few to protect the many"?'*



This decision established what became known as the 'reasonableness' test. The government had the authority to pass laws that restricted individual liberty if those restrictions, including the punishment for violating them, were found by the Court to be a reasonable means for achieving a public good.

Anti-vaxxers

Anti-vaccination groups, citing alleged cases of death and deformity from bad reactions to the smallpox vaccine, called compulsory vaccination *'the greatest crime of the age'*, claiming that it *'slaughter[s] tens of thousands of innocent children'*.

In response, newspaper editorials characterised the smallpox vaccination controversy as '*a conflict between intelligence and ignorance, civilisation and barbarism*'. The *New York Times* dismissed anti-vaccine activists as '*a familiar species of cranks*' who were '*deficient in the power to judge [science]*'. (2)

Proponents say without vaccines many people, pets, and livestock would succumb to disease. Yet many 'anti-vaxxers' reject the concept of vaccine not on its medical merit but on a freedom to choose and the freedom to ignore the consequences according to *A world without vaccines*:

'If vaccines had never been invented, if Edward Jenner had never wanted to cure smallpox, what would the world look like today? In some ways, that's an easy question to answer... The infections that are now preventable, such as polio and smallpox, would likely still be a problem'.

The estimate is that an average of 5 million people would die from smallpox every year, for totals near 200 million just between 1980 and 2018. So without vaccines, millions of people would needlessly die.

Some grifters and politicians like *RFK Jr still profess opposition to vaccinations*, as do some fundamentalist chiropractors who oppose vaccinations are still getting national attention such as a July 2021 article published in *The New York Times*, *Vocal Anti-Vaccine Chiropractors Split the Profession*, by *Maggie Astor*:

'Anyone who listened to the Idaho chiropractor Steven Baker's podcast in May would have heard a cornucopia of misinformation about the coronavirus and the vaccines protecting hundreds of millions of people against it'.

In an episode titled '*Are the "Vaccinated" People Dangerous?*' (they aren't), he claimed that scientists had never identified the whole virus (*they have*), that the vaccines turned people into '*modern-day zombies*' who spewed spike proteins in every breath and body fluid (they don't), and that vaccinated people could disrupt the menstrual cycles of women around them (*they can't*).

So, Dr Baker said, he had a new policy: If any patients made '*what I would consider a horribly poor decision to go get this shot*', he would not allow them inside his office for 30 days.

Dr Baker, who didn't respond to a request for comment, doesn't represent all Chiropractors, many of whom support vaccinations. But he is among a vocal cadre who have promoted doubts about the coronavirus vaccines online and in their clinics and, in the process, exposed a longstanding split within the profession.

The Chiropractic profession, which involves adjustment of the spine through manual manipulation and is sometimes just called Chiropractic, '*emerged from this vitalistic, almost supernatural idea of healing*', said Timothy Caulfield, the Canada research chair in health law and policy at the *University of Alberta*; '*It's difficult for them to escape their roots, and I think that's one of the reasons that so many people continue to be attracted to Chiropractic who are more likely to be vaccination hesitant, and why so many Chiropractic practitioners are in fact vaccination hesitant*'.

Although his statement reflects the bias of medical proponents that is not inaccurate, but it is incomplete that leaves an impression that chiropractic's vitalism is without any merit.

While Dr Caulfield mentioned a consensus in medical circles critical of '*this vitalistic, almost supernatural idea of healing*', he reflects an atheistic attitude that is shared by many in healthcare

2. [When the Supreme Court Ruled a Vaccine Could Be Mandatory](#)

according to *Dr Francis Collins*, former Director of the NIH, who challenged this attitude in his article, *'Why It's So Hard for Scientists to Believe in God'*?

From his personal experience, Collins admits as many as sixty percent of doctors and scientists are atheists ... who regard religious belief as little more than *'magical thinking'*. And similarly, on the other side, Collins believes that

'believers denounce science as a godless enterprise and scientists as secular elitists contemptuous of God-fearing people'. (3)



'Some of my scientific colleagues who are of an atheist persuasion are sometimes using science as a club over the head of believers basically suggesting that anything that can't be reduced to a scientific question isn't important and just represents superstition that should be gotten rid of.

'This belief in science sets them apart from those who endorse creationism or its doctrinal cousin, intelligent design, both of which depend on the existence of a supernatural force. Their belief in God challenges scientists who regard religious belief as little more than magical thinking, as some do. Their faith also challenges believers who denounce science as a godless enterprise and scientists as secular elitists contemptuous of God-fearing people'.

'Part of the problem is I think the extremists have occupied the stage. Those voices are the ones we hear. I think most people are actually kind of comfortable with the idea that science is a reliable way to learn about nature, but it's not the whole story and there's a place also for religion, for faith, for theology, for philosophy. But that harmony perspective does not get as much attention, nobody's as interested in harmony as they are in conflict, I'm afraid'.

Aside from this fascinating controversy Dr Collins broaches among philosophical, religious, scientific, and professional roles that doctors of any type may play in the healing process, let me broach a rhetorical question about an innovative use of clinical Chiropractic Care with other CAM (complementary and alternative methods) working together as, in effect, a *'vaccine effect'* as palliative care to prevent or help mitigate the massive pandemic of opioid abuse and unrelenting pain in millions of Americans.

Just as vaccines are design to mitigate infectious diseases, there are *'preventative maintenance'* methods to alleviate spine and musculoskeletal disorders that contribute heavily to the double crisis of opioids since half are prescribed for these conditions according to Dr Rick Deyo.

A study, *Health maintenance care in work-related low back pain and its association with disability recurrence*, found that Chiropractic helps patients return to work quicker than traditional medical or physical therapy care as well as avoid future episodes of back pain. (4)

The mean average duration of disability days for the physician group was 119 versus 58 for the physical therapy group and 49 for the chiropractic group.

The researchers also followed the period after the initial episode of back pain and found chiropractic patients were less prone to relapse compared to patients in the physician and physical therapy groups. 16.9% of physical therapy patients had recurring disability versus 12.5% of physician patients and just 6.2% of chiropractic patients.

3. Interviewed by David Hirschman, Recorded September 13, 2010, BigThink.com

4. Cifuentes M, Willetts J, Wasiak R. Health maintenance care in work-related low back pain and its association with disability recurrence. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 2011; 53(4): 396-404.

Conclusion

The researchers suggest part of the reason with the success of Chiropractic could lie in correcting the underlying joint dysfunction thereby preventing patients from receiving treatments of unproven cost utility or dubious efficacy from medical or PT providers.

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Cite: Smith JC. Chiropractic as vaccine. Asia-Pac Chiropr J. 2025;5.4 www.apcj.net/Papers-Issue-5-4/#SmithVaccine