

VSC Brochure

INTRODUCTION

The brain stem and spinal cord are the primary pathways for nerve impulses to and from the brain. Messages back and forth through these nerves control the health and function of virtually every other cell, tissue, organ, and system of the body.

Nerve tissue is so important, it is protected by bone. The brain is encased by the skull, and the spinal cord is covered by 24 moving bones of the spinal column.

Many everyday things can cause these bones to lose their normal motion or position. This sets off a chain reaction affecting the spinal bones, nerves, muscles, soft tissues, and results in degenerative changes throughout the body. Doctors refer to this as the Vertebral Subluxation Complex.

Besides describing how the spine can affect your overall health, the Vertebral Subluxation Complex explains why it takes time to restore optimum health. The Vertebral Subluxation Complex is the underlying cause of many health problems and is recognized by its five component parts.

Photo: Marionette

Caption: Like the strings controlling a puppet, your brain and nervous system control the function of every cell, tissue, organ, and system of your body.

Photo: Little girl playing the piano

Caption: The five component parts of the Vertebral Subluxation Complex occur simultaneously, like the notes of a musical chord.

SPINAL KINESIOPATHOLOGY

(Abnormal motion or position of spinal bones.)

The bones of the spine are designed to move, while at the same time protecting the spinal cord and nerve roots. But, sometimes they become "stuck," don't move enough, or they move too much.

This can be caused by physical trauma (repetitive motion, car accidents, slips, falls, etc.), emotional stress (worry, negative thoughts, fear, etc.), or chemical imbalances (alcohol, drugs, toxins, pollution, etc.).

When spinal joints are fixated ("stuck") and not moving enough, they force other joints to move too much. These problems can distort normal spinal curves and compromise proper function. In some cases, problems in one area of the spine can cause compensation reactions in other areas!

Doctors can detect this aspect of the Vertebral Subluxation Complex by analyzing your posture, taking diagnostic X-rays, measuring your ability to turn and bend, plus other tests.

Spinal Kinesiopathology can set in motion the other four components...

Photo: Rowers in boat.

Caption: Like the coordinated strokes of these oarsmen, each spinal joint must move properly for optimum health.

Photo: Flamingoes

Caption: With multiple spinal curves, birds enjoy remarkable flexibility and range of motion.

NEUROPATHOPHYSIOLOGY

(Abnormal nervous system function)

Because of the way your spine is designed, abnormal spinal function can rub, pinch, irritate, or choke the delicate tissues of the spinal cord and nerve roots.

While commonly associated with spinal problems, the pinched nerve (compressive lesion) is actually quite rare. Researchers suggest that only 10% to 15% of spinal-related problems are caused by direct pressure of bone on nerve tissue!

Sometimes, this problem can result in numbness, burning, or a "pins and needles" feeling.

More frequently, nerves are irritated (facilitative lesion) by improperly functioning spinal

structures. This is caused when nerve tissue is stretched, twisted, or irritated by malfunctioning spinal bones.

Nervous system impairment can affect the tissues, organs, and systems of the body, increasing the susceptibility of disease and ill health.

Muscles that support the spine are affected too...

Photo: Stalled traffic and flashing lights of auto accident.

Caption: Nerves can be choked or compressed like traffic congestion at the site of an accident or breakdown.

Photo: Frenzied trading on stock exchange floor

Caption: Nerves can become over-excited and hyperactive like the commotion on the trading floor of a stock exchange.

MYOPATHOLOGY

(Abnormal muscle function)

When muscle function is impaired from too much or too little nerve supply, muscles that support the spine respond in different ways.

When nerve impulses are diminished, muscles supporting the spine can weaken and atrophy.

When muscles are over stimulated from nerve irritation, supporting muscles can become tight and go into spasm.

In either extreme, fibrotic scar tissue can form in these muscles, changing their elasticity. This damage to the supporting muscles of the spine is why repeated adjustments are often necessary and adjustments don't seem to "hold." It also explains why long-standing spinal problems are so difficult and time-consuming to correct. Without proper rehabilitation, many patients experience a relapse of their original health complaint.

Photo: Tug of war in park.

Caption: Like the stronger team, overdeveloped muscles on one side of your spine can cause individual spinal bones to rotate and lose proper function.

Photo: Close up of cheap cut of meat.

Caption: Long-standing spinal problems result in scar tissue, like the gristle in a cheap cut of meat.

HISTOPATHOLOGY

(Abnormal soft tissue function)

When there is spinal joint malfunction, the discs, ligaments, and other connective tissues are affected, too.

While technically you can't have a "slipped" disc, the soft pulpy discs that separate each spinal vertebra can tear, bulge, herniate, and

degenerate.

Ligaments and other connective tissues in the area of the malfunctioning spinal joint are often involved. Inflammation and swelling accompany the accumulation of blood and lymph, causing a rise in temperature.

Unlike many other tissues of the body, these discs and ligaments have a poor blood supply. This makes the healing of soft tissues a very slow and time-consuming process.

In fact, complete healing often requires continued care even after the relief of obvious symptoms.

Photo: Sunburn at the beach.

Caption: Injury to discs and ligaments is like the inflammation and rise in temperature that accompanies a bad sunburn.

Photos: Melting ice cream sandwich

Caption: Like soft ice cream filling, discs can bulge, tear, or herniate, putting pressure on adjacent nerves.

PATHOPHYSIOLOGY

(Abnormal function of the spine and body.)

When there is malfunction or trauma to a joint, one of the ways the body responds is by stabilizing the area by growing new bone!

Over time, calcium deposits can build up, eventually recognizable as bone spurs and other abnormal bony growths. This arthritic "splinting" of adjacent bones is an attempt to stabilize the malfunctioning joint. If ignored or neglected long enough, the body can turn a once mobile joint into a solid block of calcium.

Throughout the body, degenerative changes can be seen in other organs and systems. Many health conditions not normally considered related to "back problems", can often be traced back to nervous system impairment by the spine.

While often seen in the aged, this degenerative condition is not part of the normal aging process. This type of spinal decay is the result of spinal problems which have been ignored or neglected for many years.

Photo: X-rays showing degeneration process

Caption1: Normal curve and equal disc spacing.

Caption2: Loss of curve and reduced range of motion.

Caption3: Disc narrowing and bone spurs.

Caption4: Joint immobilization and bone fusion.

Photo: Stalagmites and stalactites in a cave.

Caption: If ignored, adjacent bones can fuse into a solid block of mineral, like stalactites and stalagmites in a cave.

THE VERTEBRAL SUBLUXATION COMPLEX

More and more researchers have confirmed the far-reaching effects of abnormal spinal function. Every day

we're learning more about the implications of these five component parts.

Because of the intricacies of the nervous system, more research is being conducted in the areas of immune system response, aging, hormonal involvement, and even genetic consequences.

Clearly, the Vertebral Subluxation Complex may be one of the most common, yet overlooked sources of health problems.

Photo: High-tech research type

Caption: The Vertebral Subluxation Complex is attracting the attention of researchers in many different disciplines.

Photo: Photo of happy, healthy family

Caption: Prevention of the Vertebral Subluxation Complex should be part of every family's health management strategy.

For Patients

The detection, reduction, and prevention of the Vertebral Subluxation Complex is the unique

domain of the Doctor of Chiropractic. If you suspect that you, or someone you know, may be suffering from the Vertebral Subluxation Complex, contact the doctor below for a thorough examination.

References

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