



Evidence-Based Chiropractic

The Newsletter of Comprehensive Chiropractic Services, PC

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In this issue:

- A study highlighting the importance of infection control in the chiropractic office.

Did you know?

- Before Dr. D'Antoni became a chiropractor, he was a clinical microbiologist at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn, NY. Dr. D'Antoni earned a MS degree in bacteriology from Wagner College and conducted research using transmission electron microscopy (TEM) to study the morphology of the bacterium *Rhodococcus rhodochrous*.
- In our office, we adhere to a strict infection control protocol—we clean the chiropractic table between patients using hospital-grade disinfectant wipes in conjunction with changing the face paper. In addition, patients have their own electrode pads. We *never* use the same pads on different patients.

Importance of Infection Control in the Chiropractic Office

A recent study by Bifero et al. (1), published in the *American Journal of Infection Control*, caught my attention and so I decided to focus this newsletter on the topic of infection control in the chiropractic office setting.

This study assessed the role of chiropractic adjusting tables as potential reservoirs for infectious disease. In an inpatient environment such as a hospital, infection control is a major concern—so much so that it is very tightly regulated among all departments, especially in operating rooms and intensive care units. However, in the outpatient environment (eg, medical, chiropractic, and physical therapy offices), infection control is often loosely regulated because it is up to the individual clinician or clinic director to ensure that infection control protocols are updated, maintained, and followed.

The authors of the present study attempted to quantify the number of microorganisms—specifically, bacteria and fungi—found on some of the chiropractic adjusting tables in the on-campus chiropractic clinic at National University of health sciences (NUHS) in Lombard, IL. National is my *alma mater*, and two of the authors of this study were my former professors.

The head, arm, thoracic, and abdominal areas of nine (n=9) chiropractic adjusting tables were swabbed and cultured for bacteria and fungi using standard microbiological techniques. Although very few fungi were isolated, a number of pathogenic bacteria were isolated that included various coagulase-positive staphylococci and gram-negative bacilli. Alarmingly, 2 isolates of methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) were grown. These bacteria are antibiotic-resistant pathogens that can cause human diseases, which, often times, are very difficult to treat.

This study suggests that chiropractic tables could potentially transfer pathogenic (disease-causing) bacteria between patients, and the areas on the tables most prone to harboring bacteria are those in contact with the skin, such as the headrests and armrests.



Some patients find that lying on their stomach during treatment drains their nasal sinuses. I often find sweat and saliva on the headrest after a treatment. Because we take infection control very seriously, Dr. D'Antoni uses hospital-grade disinfectant wipes (CaviWipes®), saturated with the disinfectant CaviCide®, to clean the headrest and armrests of the table in addition to changing the face paper between patients. This ensures that the surface of the table is "pathogen-free" between patients, especially those areas of the table that are in contact with the skin.

CaviWipes® kill a number of microorganisms, some of which include:

- *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (causes TB)
- MRSA (the pathogen isolated in the study)
- Herpes simplex virus (HSV)
- Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)

In addition, in our office all new patients are given their own set of electrode pads on the first visit, and the fee for the initial visit includes the cost of these pads. Your name is written on the outside of the storage bag and the pads are kept in your file so that you are the only one who uses the pads. This prevents microbial cross-contamination between patients. After all, the pads are always in contact with bare skin. Thus, we never use the same pads on different patients and this is part of the infection control protocol used in our office.

Dr. Anthony V. D'Antoni

REFERENCE

1. Bifero AE, Prakash J, Bergin J. The role of chiropractic adjusting tables as reservoirs for microbial diseases. *Am J Infect Control.* 2006;34:155-157.

Bottom Line

We are committed to providing the best chiropractic care in Staten Island. We believe having an infection control protocol is an important aspect in maintaining the health of our patients. This protocol is just another way of providing the most evidence-based chiropractic care anywhere.

Tell your friends and family about our practice!

We always welcome new patients and your referrals are greatly appreciated. Remember, word-of-mouth is our best advertising.

Would you like Dr. D'Antoni to speak at a community event?

He is available to speak on a variety of health-related topics. Call the office today to find out more.