

Measured Success, Evaluating the Effectiveness of Spinal Decompression Therapy :

Background

Over 31 million Americans suffer from back pain, and 80% of all Americans will live with it in their lifetime (Forer, 2012). Surgical options for low-back pain often presents postoperative complications (Street et al., 2011). Chiropractic care often uses a non-invasive approach for spinal decompression therapy. Researchers (Gionis and Groteke, 2012) found that 86% of patients completing decompression therapy reported resolution of their symptoms. The outcome of a decompression study (Blumke, 2014) completed by a Davenport University health information management intern was found to be highly successful with little to no post-treatment complications.

Decompression therapy evaluation

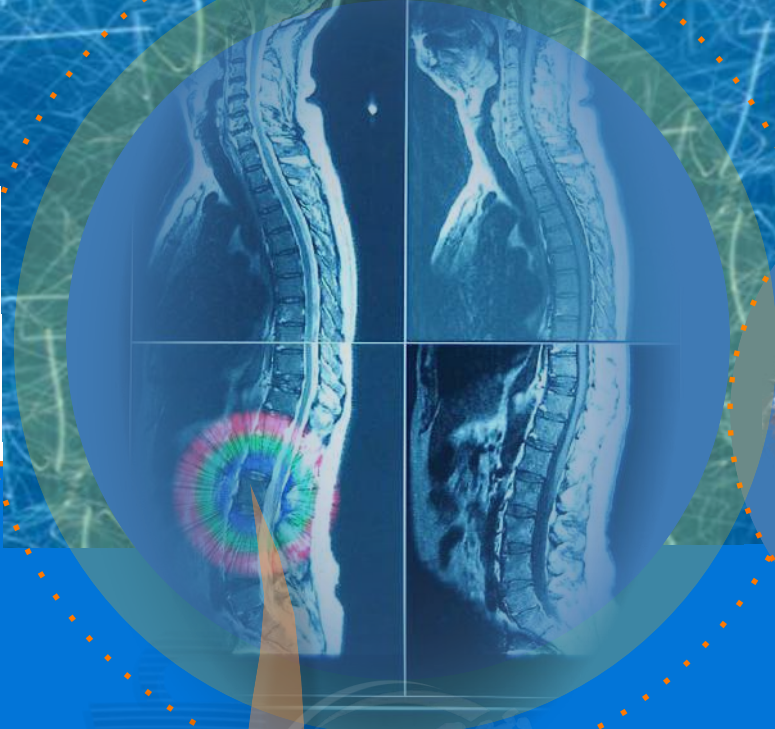
In health information organizations, students participate in real-life activities to apply their acquired knowledge. In this case, the student project documented review, data collection, and analysis under the supervision of a doctor of chiropractic. The intern had access to patient records from 2011 to 2014.

To track satisfactory rates for the spinal decompression treatment provided in the facility, the electronic health records of 163 random patients were examined to record date of treatments, gender, chief complaint, and diagnosis. A section for comments was included from each patient to record medical history, nature of the onset, exacerbating factors, and pain indices throughout the treatment plan.

The patient profile was fairly uniform, with a slight majority of women (54%) over men (46%). Over 50% complained of lower back pain. The remainder of complaints were neck, shoulder, hip, leg, and foot pain.

The clinical evaluation achieved success above 90%, with success being “satisfied” or “very satisfied.” Of the 163 patient charts examined, 14 were “not satisfied” or having deemed the therapy unsuccessful. Four of those patients discontinued their care to seek a surgical option to minimize pain that was not responding to nonsurgical spinal decompression.





The majority of the patients reported looking forward to receiving care because of the positive results of their treatment, and many were able to avoid surgery. After treatment, patients reported feeling better with minimal pain and overall felt optimistic about receiving chiropractic care.

The results of this evaluation exceed the expected outcomes for chiropractic care. Statistical evidence shows that throughout the U.S., more than 75% of patients are satisfied with the end result of their chiropractic care (Blumke, 2014). In this evaluation, 91% of patients who complained of pain in their back or neck were pleased with their nonsurgical spinal decompression outcome. ²

Summary and recommendations

This clinical evaluation of the efficacy of spinal decompression treatment (Blumke, 2014) revealed some notable outcomes and data. An overall successful outcome of 91 percent was seen in cases that had undergone a nonoperative axial spinal decompression treatment plan.

Previous studies have suggested the success rate for spinal decompression treatment to be between 53 and 86% (Beattie, 2008; Gose, 1998; Odell, 2003). The practice integrated the five elements of spinal decompression therapy described in this report. These five elements, if applied consistently, can provide patients with successful outcomes.

² Individual results may vary. These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA.



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The technology of the table as well as the method in which the care is administered are important for achieving successful outcomes for patients. The success rate of spinal decompression treatment as noted in this evaluation and the cited studies is especially remarkable when compared to the risk factors for surgical treatment of the same or similar conditions (Street et al., 2012). Why, then, aren't more chiropractors adding this important treatment option to their practice? Doubts regarding the effectiveness of decompression treatment should be allayed by these findings. Spinal decompression treatment is demonstrably an effective, nonsurgical method for treating patients with neck and low-back pain.³

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