

The Alliance Update

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Summer 2014 Edition

Alliance Chiropractic &
Wellness Clinic
Chiropractic-Massage-
Naturopathic Medicine

Health
Newsletter

Epidural Corticosteroids for Sciatica: More Trouble Than They're Worth ?

Source: *Dynamic Chiropractic Canada* – June 1, 2014, Vol. 07, Issue 06 By Deborah Pate, DC, DACBR



Use of epidural steroid injections has increased dramatically in recent years, despite the fact that studies have failed to demonstrate evidence that this procedure is clinically helpful. Other studies suggest steroid injections may actually be dangerous.

Steroid Injections for Sciatica: Small, Short-Term Relief Only

In a recent study involving more than 2,000 patients in which epidural steroid injections were compared with placebo for sciatica, epidural steroid injections produced small, statistically *insignificant* short-term improvements in leg pain and disability (but did not lessen back pain) compared to placebo. This improvement also was only over a short period of time – two weeks to three months. Beyond 12 months, there was no significant difference between groups.¹

Side Effects Including Skeletal Deterioration, Fracture Risk

Besides infection, there are other side effects associated with epidural steroid injections: bleeding, nerve damage, and dural puncture. There are also side effects associated with the steroid medication, including: a transient decreased immune function; high blood sugar; stomach ulcers; avascular necrosis (mainly in the hip joint); cataracts; and increased risk of fracture. Therapeutic steroids may reduce pain, however the use of steroid injections seem to promote deterioration of bone quality. A study published in the *Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery* looked at lumbar epidural steroid injection (LESI), and the potential impact on bone fragility and vertebral fractures (spinal fractures). Researchers discovered that more injections were associated with an increased likelihood of fractures, and each successive injection increased the risk of spinal fracture by 21 percent. Based on this evidence, LESIs clearly exacerbate bone fragility.

Both European and American guidelines, based on systemic reviews, conclude that epidural corticosteroid injections may offer temporary relief of sciatica, but do not reduce the rate of subsequent surgery. Also, facet joint injections with corticosteroids seem no more effective than saline injections.

Summary

1. Epidural steroid injections have little clinical benefit (short or long term) and are associated with significant risks.
2. Steroid injections cause deterioration of bone quality, elevating the risk of spinal fracture.
3. Use of epidural steroid injections has increased dramatically despite lack of evidence to justify the procedure.

Movement is Life

Source: Wilmot EG, et al. *Diabetologia*, 2012;55(11):2895-905.



Researchers conducted a review examining the association of sedentary (sitting) time with diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and death from cardiovascular disease, and death from all other causes. The studies reviewed included 794,577 participants. The greatest sedentary time compared with the lowest, was associated with a 112% increase in risk of diabetes, a 147% increase in the risk of cardiovascular events, a 90% increase in the risk of cardiovascular mortality, and a 49% increase in the risk of mortality from all other causes. Bottom line: make sure you get up and move around frequently throughout the day!

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7 Tricks to Improve Your Memory

Source: <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2014/04/24/memory-improvement-tricks.aspx>



It was once believed that brain function peaked during early adulthood and then slowly declined, leading to lapses in memory and brain fog as people aged. Now it's known that a modern lifestyle plays a significant role in contributing to cognitive decline, which is why exposure to toxins, chemicals, poor diet, lack of sleep, stress, and much more can actually hinder the functioning of the brain. The flipside is also true in that a healthy lifestyle can support brain health and even encourage the brain to grow new neurons—a process known as neurogenesis.

The brain's hippocampus, i.e. the memory center, is especially able to grow new cells and it's now known that the hippocampus regenerates throughout a person's lifetime. This may happen even into a person's 90s, given the right environment. There are many lifestyle-based 'tools' that can help, and do not require expensive prescription medication or a medical procedure. Try the following to improve your memory:

1. Eat Right

Curry, celery, broccoli, cauliflower, and walnuts contain antioxidants and other compounds that protect your brain health and may even stimulate the production of new brain cells. Increase animal-based omega-3 fat intake and reduce consumption of damaged omega-6 fats. Coconut oil is another healthful fat for brain function.

2. Exercise

Exercise encourages the brain to work at optimum capacity by stimulating nerve cells to multiply, strengthening their interconnections and protecting them from damage.

3. Stop Multitasking

Used for decades to describe the parallel processing abilities of computers, multitasking is now shorthand for the human attempt to simultaneously do as many things as possible, as quickly as possible. Ultimately, multitasking has been shown to decrease efficiency, cause errors, and reduce the ability to recall and remember.

4. Get a Good Night's Sleep

Reduced sleep can negatively affect memory and performance of challenging skills. In fact, a single night of sleeping only four to six hours can impact a person's ability to think clearly the next day. This holds true for infants too, and research shows that naps can boost babies' brainpower. Specifically, infants who slept in between learning and testing sessions were better able to recognize patterns in new information, which signals an important change in memory that plays an essential role in cognitive development.

5. Play Brain Games

If the brain is not sufficiently challenged with new, and surprising information, it eventually begins to deteriorate. Research of brain plasticity shows that by providing brains with appropriate stimuli, this degeneration can be counteracted. Ideally, invest at least 20 minutes a day, but spend no more than five to seven minutes on a specific task. Spending longer amounts of time on a task, weakens the benefits.

6. Master a New Skill

Engaging in "purposeful and meaningful activities" stimulates a person's neurological system; counters the effects of stress-related diseases; reduces the risk of dementia; and enhances health and well-being.

7. Try Mnemonic Devices

Mnemonic devices are memory tools to help remember words, information or concepts. They help to organize information into an easier-to-remember format. Try:

- Acronyms (such as PUG for "pick up grapes")
- Visualizations (such as imagining a tooth to remember your dentist's appointment)
- Rhymes (if you need to remember a name, for instance, think "Shirley's hair is curly")
- Chunking, which is breaking up information into smaller "chunks" (such as organizing numbers into the format of a phone number)

Cool Body Facts

Source: http://icantseeyou.typepad.com/my_weblog/2008/02/100-very-cool-f.html

- **You get a new stomach lining every three to four days.** The mucus-like cells lining the walls of the stomach would soon dissolve due to the strong digestive acids in your stomach if they weren't constantly replaced.
- **Nerve impulses to and from the brain travel as fast as 170 miles per hour.**

Putting Meat Into Perspective

Source: By David Seaman, DC, MS, DABCN; *Dynamic Chiropractic Canada* – June 1, 2014, Vol. 07, Issue 06; Levine ME et al. *Cell Metab*, 2014;19:407-17



A recent study looking at protein intake and mortality found that people aged 50–65 reporting high animal protein intake had a 75% increase in overall mortality and a 4-fold increase in cancer death risk during the following 18 years. These associations were either eliminated or significantly decreased if the proteins were plant derived. Conversely, high protein intake was associated with reduced cancer and overall mortality in respondents over 65. A 5-fold increase in diabetes mortality was observed across all ages on a high animal protein diet. The study results recommend that low protein intake during middle age followed by moderate to high protein consumption in old adults may optimize healthspan and longevity. Based on this research, the following headlines have been

recently released in popular media: "Meat and Cheese May Be as Bad for You as Smoking." (Science Daily); and "Diets High in Meat, Eggs, and Dairy Could Be as Harmful to Health as Smoking." (The Guardian).

Blaming meat for cancer and heart disease has been a popular theme for many years. It started with Ancel Keys, who became known as the father of the lipid hypothesis of heart disease.

The anti-meat and anti-fat promotion was strongly supported in 1977 when the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs recommended *Dietary Goals for the United States*. The published recommendation was to increase the consumption of fruit, vegetables and whole grains, obtaining 55-60 percent of total calories from these types of carbohydrates. What people did instead was obtain their carbohydrates mostly from refined grains. Bless our hearts.

The Logic Breakdown

The caloric breakdown of the average American's diet currently stands at approximately 20 percent from refined grains; 20 percent from refined sugars; and 20 percent from refined oils. Another 10 percent comes from dairy. How can meat be blamed for health problems when almost 60 percent of consumed calories come from refined carbohydrates and oils? How is it that these totally unnatural foods escape criticism, but meat gets the blame? Granted, not all modern meat is healthy. Most is grain-fed, sedentary, inflamed, filled with medications, and obese. In comparison, healthy meat is lean and should live on grass and other vegetation. Why is it that inflamed, obese meat is not differentiated from lean, healthy, normal meat?

Importantly in the recent study, researchers did not differentiate sources of animal protein or sources of carbohydrate and fat. Furthermore, *dairy, eggs, meat, fish, vegetable, fruit, grain, sugar, flour, trans, omega-6, and omega-3* are not mentioned in the paper. Many consumers have been conditioned to believe that meat causes heart disease and now cancer. It would be interesting to see if a group eating more vegetables, less sugar, flour, refined oils, and only organic meat protein sources still showed the same increased risks for cancer and heart disease.

Laughter As Medicine

- Long ago when men cursed and beat the ground with sticks, it was called witchcraft. Today, it is called golf.
- Today I tried to donate blood but they had too many questions about where I got it.
- First the doctor told me the good news: I was going to have a disease named after me.
- I have kleptomania, but when it gets bad, I take something for it.
- STUDENT: But I don't think I deserve a zero on this exam.
TEACHER: Neither do I, but it's the lowest mark I can give you.
- Do you call a person who has abandoned their diet a deserter?
- The advantage of exercising everyday is that you die healthier.

Doubling Breast Cancer Survival Rates With Vitamin D

Source: *Dynamic Chiropractic Canada* – June 1, 2014, Vol. 07, Issue 06; By James P. Meschino, DC, MS

Many doctors and researchers are convinced vitamin D plays an important role in preventing various cancers, including breast cancer. Over the past 20-25 years, various studies suggest women with higher blood levels of vitamin D have an associated lower incidence of breast cancer.

In recent years (2007), a large four-year clinical trial involving 1,179 healthy, postmenopausal women (over the age of 55), reported that participants supplemented with vitamin D (1,100 IU per day) and calcium (1,400-1,500 mg per day) showed a 77 percent reduction in incidence of all combined invasive cancers, including breast cancer, compared to women given placebo only.

Helping Prevent Recurrence, Progression and Fatality

But what about women who have already experienced breast cancer? Can vitamin D supplementation help prevent breast cancer recurrence, progression, and related fatality? A study published in March 2014 in *Anticancer Research* has now shown that breast cancer survivors would be well-advised to keep their vitamin D blood level within the ideal range. The study by Mohr, et al., showed that breast cancer patients with high levels of vitamin D in their blood were twice as likely to survive the disease compared to women with low levels of vitamin D. The data showed that women with an average vitamin D blood level of 75nmol/L experienced survival rates double that of women with an average vitamin D blood level of only 42nmol/L. The researchers pointed out that the average vitamin D blood level in patients with breast cancer in the United States is 42nmol/L.

In a follow-up interview regarding the Mohr, et al., study, co-author Dr. Cedric F. Garland, professor in the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine at the University of California, pointed out that "a 2011 meta-analysis by Garland and colleagues estimated that a serum vitamin D blood level of 125 nmol/L is associated with a 50 percent lower risk of breast cancer. While there are some variations in absorption, those who consume 4,000 IU per day of vitamin D from food or a supplement normally would reach a serum level of 125 nmol/L. Garland urged patients to ask their health care provider to measure their levels before substantially increasing vitamin D intake."

Vitamin D toxicity is not known to occur until reaching a vitamin D blood level at or above 250 nmol/L, so there is a large margin of safety when taking vitamin D supplements.

Clinic Services

1. Chiropractic Care
2. Laser Therapy
3. Electrical Therapy Modalities
4. Sports Injury Prevention/Management
5. Custom Foot Orthotics
6. Massage Therapy¹
7. Naturopathic Medicine
8. Acupuncture

Clinic Hours²

| | | |
|-----------|------------------|-----------------|
| Monday | 8:00am— 12:00pm | 3:30pm - 7:30pm |
| Tuesday | 8:00am— 12:00pm | |
| Wednesday | 8:00am— 12:00pm | 3:30pm –7:30pm |
| Thursday | | 3:30pm –7:30pm |
| Friday | 8:00am – 12:00pm | |

Please note:

1. Massage therapy is available outside core office hours.
2. Emergency care is available most weekends. Please call the office and listen to the welcome message to confirm.

Announcements

- Check out our WEBSITE at www.alliancechiroandwellness.com. You can find archived issues of our newsletter as well as other clinic information. Please note appointment requests should be made by calling the office at 905-648-0661. We do not accept appointment cancellations, bookings, or reschedules via our web site. These should be done by calling the office directly.
- Dr. Morphet will be away from the office from August 18th, returning August 25th.
- We are now on Facebook. Receive health related information and clinic announcements by liking 'Alliance Chiropractic & Wellness Clinic'.

Alliance Chiropractic & Wellness Clinic

101-911 Golf Links Rd. Ancaster ON L9K 1H9
Tel: 905-648-0661 Fax: 905-648-1268