

Pediatric Chiropractics: Why Not Just Throw Babies Under Steam Rollers?



By Julianna LeMieux — July 29, 2016



A disturbing view of pediatric chiropractics Image courtesy of www.abc.net.au ^[1]

A perfect storm of ignorance and misinformation will be taking place in Maui this December at the International Chiropractors Association (ICA) Council on Chiropractic Pediatrics annual conference.

Amidst the backdrop of talks on the questionable practice of the manipulation of children's spines, will be a session on "vaccines and autism."

It is bad enough to perform spinal manipulation therapy (SMT) on children and babies (pediatric chiropractors now recommend starting spinal manipulations a few days after birth - "Chiropractic care can never start too early" appears on the Council on Chiropractic Pediatrics [website](#) ^[2].) By including the session on vaccines and autism at the conference, they are offering children a one - two punch. As if the inappropriate treatment that you may get from your chiropractor is not bad enough, now their customers will have whooping cough, too.

Among the panoply of conditions that pediatric chiropractors claim they can heal are colic, asthma, bed wetting, ear infections, breastfeeding challenges and autism - a virtual "who's who" of health and behavioral challenges for kids and parents. Although it seems too good to be true, somehow their sales pitch is working. In 2005, the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners reported that children (under age 17) accounted for 18.2% of a chiropractor's practice. (1) According to a 2007 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) survey, more than [2 million](#) ^[3] children have received some kind of manipulation within the year. Even worse, for the youngest children ages 0-4, the predominant reason (~ 40%) was prevention or "wellness care." (1)

Two comprehensive reviews of the literature, published in 2005 and 2007 by Gotlib and Rupert,

attempted to provide a comprehensive view of the field of pediatric chiropractics with its potential benefits and pitfalls. Both reviews conclude that there is such a paucity of legitimate information, no beneficial conclusions can be drawn. (2)

The most recent literature review of pediatric chiropractics states

"I do not know of any credible evidence to support chiropractic subluxation theory [altering a misalignment of the vertebrae.] Any attempt to manipulate the immature, cartilaginous spine of a neonate or a small child to correct a putative chiropractic subluxation should be regarded as dangerous and unnecessary." (3)

Not surprisingly, Andrew Wakefield (the originator and poster child of the modern anti-vaccine movement) is scheduled to speak at the "vaccines and autism" session of the conference.

His 1998 paper, originally published in *The Lancet* and later retracted, contained falsified data linking the MMR vaccine and autism. Wakefield's fraudulent practice of performing unnecessary medical tests on children in order to create a false link between the MMR vaccine and autism were exposed, primarily through the investigative work of Brian Deer, as motivated by personal financial gain. Wakefield sought to intentionally scare people away from the triple shot of the MMR vaccine in order to promote his future business prospects in a company planning to produce the same vaccines in single shot doses. And, he was not above hurting children in order to do it. Despite the retraction of the paper, the fear that continues in the aftermath of its publication created a momentum that keeps the anti-vax movement alive and healthy.

There is very little evidence that supports chiropractic techniques in general, and even less for children. Worse, there is the real possibility of harming the soft cartilage that is present in children's spines through spinal manipulations. In contrast, vaccinations are, without question, an incredibly important health choice for children and any other opinion is based on the fraudulent work of a con-artist.

I have been wracking my brain to try to understand why a conference on chiropractics would invite a person who is anti-vaccination to speak....? It makes no sense. Why would the organizers invite a man who was described by the General Medical Council as "dishonest, irresponsible and showed callous disregard for the distress and pain of children." because he performed physical tests and procedures on children unnecessarily for his own professional and financial gain...?

OK. Now I get it.

They should just call it the "We Hurt Kids Council" and go spend the day at the beach.

REFERENCES:

- (1) Gleberzon, BJ et al. The Use of Spinal Manipulative Therapy for Pediatric Health Conditions: A Systematic Review of the Literature. *J Can Chiropr Assoc.* 2012; 56(2)
- (2) Gotlib, A and Rupert, R. Chiropractic manipulation in pediatric health conditions - an updated systematic review. *Chiropractic and Osteopathy.* 2008; 16(11)
- (3) Homola, S Pediatric Chiropractic Care: The Subluxation Question and Referral Risk *Bioethics.*

This is chiropractic medicine - giving away a free visit



Photo taken by the author outside of our ACSH office on 42nd St.

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[2] <http://www.icapediatrics.com/index.php>

[3] <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/chiropractic/introduction.htm>