Spinal Degeneration Report

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The Problem:

Spinal degeneration and decay are at all time highs in this country. The Chicago Institute of Neurosurgery and Neuroresearch web site says 85% of people will have evidence of spinal degeneration by the age of 50.(11) That is almost 9 out of 10 people!

There are millions of people suffering from the effects of spinal degeneration. The CDC says spinal degeneration is the nation's leading cause of pain and disability.(12) Something must be done to stop this terrible health condition that is affecting our country at an epidemic rate. The purpose of this report is to discover preventative measures that could potentially decrease or eliminate the number of cases of spinal degeneration.

The Solution:

Just as with most health care problems in the world, "prevention" is the best solution we have. It is important to note, that in order to prevent something, you must first know what causes it, and then promote the opposite. Early detection, although valuable, is not the best form of prevention.

This exact scenario was

successfully demonstrated in the field of dentistry. In the early 1900s a dentist by the name of Alfred Fones, was shocked at the number of people losing their teeth due to dental caries and periodontal disease.

Dr. Fones became convinced that the regular removal of plaque and other substances on the teeth could reduce or prevent tooth loss. He began a campaign to educate others that some dental diseases could actually be prevented. Dr. Fones is now considered "The Founder of Dental Hygiene". When we practice proper dental hygiene we are removing the cause of tooth decay (this is much more effective than just “early detection”). This is all common sense to us now, but back then, it was a very new idea. The Connecticut Dental Hygienists’ Association says this about Dr. Fones idea of dental hygiene, "This vision of disease prevention was almost unknown in a field where tooth extractions were frequent treatments for dental problems."

Causes of Degeneration

In the following paragraphs we will cover some of the major causes of spinal degeneration. I was surprised at the number of scientific studies available on this subject.

As I mentioned above, when we discover the cause of spinal degeneration, then we can formulate a plan to avoid it. I am confident that the following scientific studies and information will show you, without a doubt, practicing proper spinal hygiene and utilizing regular chiropractic care (for a lifetime) is the best way to prevent spinal decay and promote spinal health.

Immobilization:

We now know for a fact that immobilization, fixation, and abnormal biomechanics (abnormal function) of a joint are associated with degeneration of the joint (there are over 76 joints just in your spine and pelvis). Dr. T Vidman says in his published paper, “It (evidence) shows beyond a reasonable doubt that immobilization is not only a cause of osteoarthritis (degeneration), but that it delays healing.”(1)

We also know that the longer a joint is immobilized or fixated, the higher the chance that degeneration and decay will begin. Norkin and Levangie say in their published study, “If the joint is immobilized for a few weeks in the position of comfort, contractures will develop in the surrounding soft tissue and as a consequence, a normal range of motion will be impossible.”(2)

This is one reason we are seeing more cases of spinal degeneration at even earlier ages. In today’s society we are becoming more and more sedentary. We spend the majority of our lives sitting. Unfortunately, sitting for the spine is like sugar for the teeth. It’s just not good for it over long periods of time.

Think about the amount of sitting we do in our society. We are in school sitting most of the day, from age 5 to age 18. Then we go to college and sit some more, and then we graduate from college just to get a job sitting in front of a computer everyday for the rest of our lives. No wonder people are developing a limited range of motion in the spine. The old saying definitely applies here, “If you don’t use it, you’ll lose it”.

Another scientific study drives home the point even more saying, “Muscular disuse leads to weakness, incoordination, atrophy, and loss of flexibility. Joint immobilization leads to bone demineralization, capsular adhesions, and decreased ligamentous stress tolerance (including annular weakness).”(7)

The best way to fight the effects of disuse is to get plenty of exerice and to do daily spinal hygiene procedures that take your spine through its full range of motion. Doing this on a daily bases is a great way to prevent fixation and immobilization that can cause spinal degeneration. Spinal range of motion exercises will help to maintain the proper motion of the spine and decrease your chance of spinal decay. You can find easy-to-do, two minute spinal range of motion exercises at www.HomeSpinalCare.com.

*There are some indications hypermobility and instability play a role in the development of degenerative disc disease as well. Generally (I have found) all cases end in hypomobility and continue to progress.

Posture:

The stress on the spine from long periods of poor posture is no doubt a major cause of spinal degeneration. Most people vastly underestimate the importance of good posture. Lennon et al. states, “Posture affects and moderates all human functions, both consciously and unconsciously, from breathing to hormone production to thinking.”(4)

Poor posture also contributes to many cases of severe back and neck pain. In fact one study showed, “With increasing kyphotic posture (head forward posture), there was a trend towards greater mortality.”(5)

So we see that poor posture does not just cause back pain and spinal degeneration, but it also causes poor health. That same study went on to say, those with hyperkyphotic posture (extreme head forward posture) were approximately 2 times more likely to die from pulmonary causes, and 2.4 times more likely to die from atherosclerosis.(5)

Spinal degeneration doesn't happen overnight, the development takes years. No one wakes up and says "I am going to have poor posture today." It is something that we develop over time from bad habits. The stress from poor posture and gravity upon the spine begins to cause wear and tear to our joints. Troyanovich et al. puts it like this, "These stress patterns over time can lead to alterations in structure, such as subarachnoid adhesions and degenerative changes in the neural tissues and alterations in function of the sensory, motor, and autonomic nervous systems."(6)

This is very important because it is saying that not only does poor posture cause spinal degeneration but is also causes interference to the nervous system (brain, spinal cord, and nerves). Your nervous system controls every function of your body and as you will see later this is exactly why I say, "Everyone should have a chiropractor on their health care team."

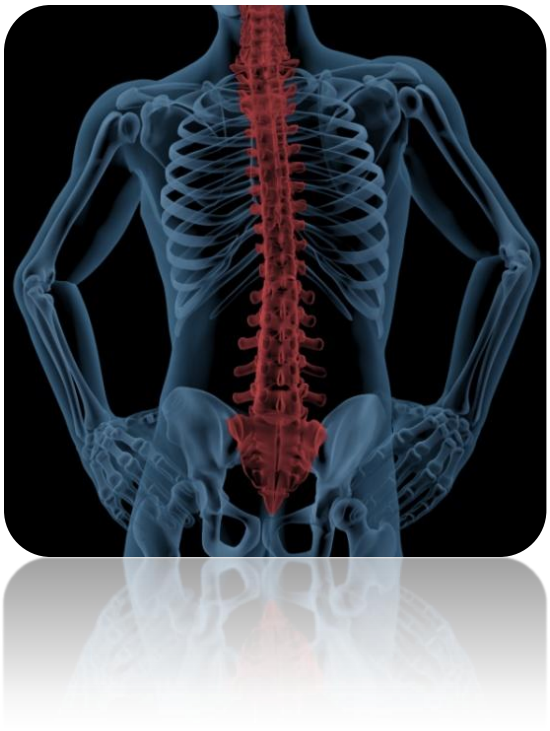
If you are like most people you will not consider taking care of your spine until you are having some kind of problem. This is similar to someone waiting to get a cavity before they start brushing. Now is always the best time to start practicing proper spinal hygiene and care. It is a well known fact that you do not have to have symptoms to develop spinal degeneration.

Here is a quote from another scientific study to back up my point. "Lumbar discs and muscles degenerate without symptoms in apparently healthy subjects. Decreased water content in disc, muscle atrophy, and muscle fat deposition were seen in asymptomatic (no symptoms, no pain) subjects. This leads to poor posture and spinal degeneration."(8) So whether or not you are in pain is irrelevant. Spinal hygiene procedures (and regular chiropractic care) should be an ongoing habit for the rest of your life, pain or no pain.

I really hope you understand how important it is to have good posture. It is a fact that for every inch of forward head posture you increase the weight of the head on the shoulders by 10 pounds.(8) That type of stress put anywhere on the spine can cause spinal degeneration over time.

Doing daily or weekly spinal hygiene and postural exercises can help to prevent poor posture. Regular chiropractic care can correct postural distortions before they become extremely hazardous to your health. You can find simple postural exercises at www.HomeSpinalCare.com.

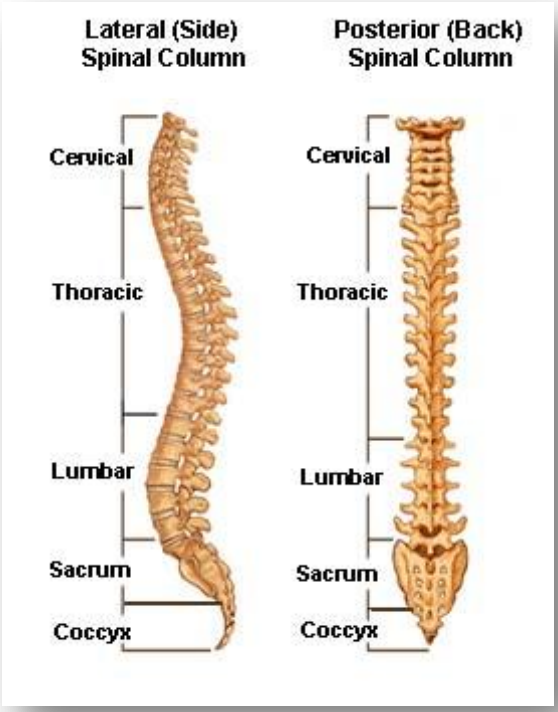
Spinal Alignment:



Although posture is a form of spinal alignment, there are varying degrees that are not always detectable by analyzing posture alone. Some misalignments can be detected by skilled palpation while others can only be seen on x-ray. Troyanovich et al. says, “Altered alignment of the spinal column is known to cause bone, disc, ligament and myofascial degeneration.”

It is important to note that chiropractors specialize in correcting this distortion of the spine. Misalignment is only one component of the vertebral subluxation complex (A term to describe dysfunctional joints in the spine causing nerve interference). Chiropractic is the only health care profession in the world that specializes in the detection and correction of vertebral subluxations. That is another reason why I say, “Everyone should have a chiropractor.”

It is a well known fact that humans can develop misalignment in the spine that can be related to many health conditions. Dr. James Chestnut, a well known chiropractor and published author says, “It is widely accepted that joints can lose their proper motion and alignment resulting in decreased proprioceptive stimulation of the CNS (interference to your nervous system). It is also widely accepted that adjustments and exercise can restore this motion and restore proprioceptive stimulation.”(10)



Although chiropractic is the only profession that specifically addresses the correction of misalignment; proper alignment of the spine is taught in every professional school in the country today. Look in any anatomy book and you will find reference to the proper alignment of the spine. The spine should be straight when looked at from front to back and should have noticeable curves when looked at from the side. Each vertebra should sit directly atop the one below it. Here is an illustration you will see in all anatomy textbooks.

Conclusion:

Since there is overwhelming evidence that the above conditions are a cause of spinal degeneration and decay, (*obviously there are others such as injury or genetic predisposition, but for the purposes of this report we will focus on preventable causes) it is a logical conclusion that decreasing lifestyle stresses, increasing mobility, and improving posture and spinal alignment will lead to a decrease in the number of cases of spinal degeneration, while improving spinal health and health in general.

In light of the facts, I recommend lifestyle activities that will promote the opposite of immobility, poor posture, and spinal misalignment, just as brushing your teeth promotes the opposite of what causes tooth decay.

It is recommended that every individual, starting at a young age, begin proper spinal hygiene activities and regular spinal checkups from a board certified chiropractor. I also recommend daily/weekly spinal hygiene activities such as range of motion, postural muscle strengthening, and spinal molding. I have found these to be very easy and very effective spinal hygiene activities. You can download a FREE ebook called "At Home Spinal Care" and 4 FREE spinal hygiene videos right now at www.HomeSpinalCare.com.

If you have found this information helpful, please tell a friend about it so they can understand how to take care of their spine also!

(Copy and Paste the link below – Then email it to your friends!)

www.HomeSpinalCare.com

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