

# Chiropractic Care and older people: improved function, less falls.

Research: Chiropractic care can improve sensory, motor functions important in falls risk, and impact quality of life



A newly published trial (1) has shown that 12 weeks of chiropractic care in a group of older patients resulted in improvements in their sensory and motor functions that are important for falls risk, as well as improvement in the physical component of quality of life. The study, the main trial in chiropractic researcher Dr. Kelly Holt's PhD, states:

*"Falls account for more than 80% of injury-related hospital admissions in people older than 65 years, and they are the leading cause of injury-related death in older adults"*

The study showed that compared with the control group:

- Those receiving chiropractic care "improved significantly in ankle joint position sense error." This shows a potential impact of chiropractic care on proprioception, or the brain's ability to know where the body is in space.
- There was also a significant improvement of increased sensorimotor function at 12-weeks. Interestingly they only started to improve after 4 weeks of care, but not before.
- At the 12-week mark, the chiropractic group also improved by 13.5% in multisensory processing (integrating information from two or more senses), an important factor in falls risk.
- The chiropractic group also displayed statistically significant improvements in quality of life related to physical health.

## Story at-a-glance

1. This Randomized Controlled Trial showed that chiropractic can help improve function in older people, with a possible impact on their overall health and quality of life. We should encourage older adults to get checked!
2. There was a really big improvement in one of the measures as a result of more than 4 weeks of chiropractic care, but not less time. Sometimes the improvements in function that we're looking for just take time.
3. **Practical Application:** 12 weeks of chiropractic care resulted in improvements in some factors that are important for falls risk (sensory and motor function), as well as improvement in the physical component of quality of life in a group of older adult people.

*"In general, older people are underrepresented in many chiropractic practices." says Holt "This study should give chiropractors confidence that they can help improve function in their older patients and that may have an impact on their overall health and quality of life. We should encourage older adults to get checked!"*

From this study, chiropractors can confidently say that *"12 weeks of chiropractic care has resulted in improvements in some factors that are important for falls risk (sensory and motor function), as well as improvement in the physical component of quality of life in a group of older adult patients."*

1. Holt, Kelly R et al, "Effectiveness of Chiropractic Care to Improve Sensorimotor Function Associated With Falls Risk in Older People: A Randomized Controlled Trial," Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics.